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Kent on Sunday

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Mid Edition No 622

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Police join the ranks of us all feeling the strain of job insecurity

THERE are few people fortunate enough to be in a job where they can look ahead with confidence at their position; the economic situation has demonstrated a lack of stability in recent years which has eroded a sense of security which once many took for granted.

And that sense of unease has stretched into a whole range of services - even those where regulations prevent redundancies being made.

So it is perhaps of little surprise to discover that morale in Kent Police is currently at an all-time low.

Both uniform and administrative staff alike have felt the sharp blade of the cuts imposed by reductions in central government budgets.

And while the top brass will bravely battle on, seeking to reassure the public - as they



Editor **Chris Britcher**

ought to - those on the ground are struggling to cope.

Inside we take a look at some of the cracks appearing among the Kent force. It is certainly hard to see how the erosion of staff numbers can do anything other than leave those left with more to do and less time to do it.

But that's a situation most people, in any walk of life currently find themselves in. For all the talk of recovery, these remain very tough times.

Elsewhere, we profile one of the most colourful of Kent MPs who divides opinion like no other - Sir Roger Gale - the Tory stalwart who has held his seat since 1983, is man who before Westminster was an actor, TV producer and even a pirate radio DJ.

His job is up for review every time the nation goes to the polls. See if you'd give him your vote.

Enjoy your bank holiday weekend.



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Cops slam legal loophole claims over 30mph roads

By Chris Murphy

editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

POLICE chiefs have slammed a barrister's claims that the county council's decision to turn off street lights could create a legal loophole which would mean 30mph speed limits need not apply.

Kent County Council is turning off some 70,000 of the county's 120,000 street lights during certain hours at night in a bid to cut energy bills.

But Deal barrister Antony Hook, who also stood as a Euro MP during May's election, claims the move may give drivers the chance to escape prosecution for speeding.

He says: "Section 81 of the Road Traffic Regulations Act provides that it is an offence to exceed 30mph on a restricted road. Section 85(4) provides that a person shall not be convicted where there is not the necessary lighting system unless there are the necessary signs."

He said: "Many or even the majority of residential roads do not have speed limit signs and are legally restricted to 30mph if they have working street lights up to 200 yards apart."



SPEED: Could council policy of switching off lights allow motorists to escape speed penalties?

And this is where the loophole works, he claims.

Mr Hook said: "The courts have ruled that speed limits may not apply if street lights are broken, too far apart or illuminate the pavement instead of the road."

"It follows that there is a strong legal argument that switching off street lights can in some cases remove a speed limit and provide a defence to a person charged with speeding."

"Motorists may have a defence to

a speeding charge because street lights have been switched off. This may make all the difference as to whether or not people get points, a fine or lose their driving licence and possibly their job as well."

But Kent Police and the Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership lashed out at the claims.

In a joint statement, Inspector Tony Dyer from the Kent Police roads policing unit spoke for both organisations.

He said: "If you are in a built-up

area and there are street lights then the speed limit is 30mph unless it is signed otherwise. Irrespective of the time of day or whether the lights are on or off, Kent Police would seek to enforce the 30mph speed limit."

The Deal barrister told us: "I am absolutely not encouraging anyone to drive in an irresponsible fashion."

"But I am just pointing that there is an interesting legal issue that may well affect a lot of people in Kent."

School bus pass boost as travel firms offer £1 off-peak ticket deals

YOUNGSTERS who hold a Young Person's Travel Pass will be able to travel at weekends and evenings for just £1 a journey, after a special deal was offered by bus firms Stagecoach and Arriva.

The pass replaces the popular Kent Freedom Pass which was phased out at the end of the last academic year.

As a result of costs, secondary school students aged 11-16 who catch a regular bus service to their school can now hold a £200 pass which entitles them to one journey to and from school during term time and between 6am to 7pm.

The previous pass offered unlimited travel seven days a week.

The decision by Kent County Council - which subsidised the former pass - to replace the £150 Kent Freedom Pass initially sparked a flurry of protests.

Now, however, the bus firms are offering a deal for £1 a trip journeys at evenings and weekends to cardholders simply by scanning their Young Person's Travel Pass - or an

off-peak season ticket for an extra £50 a year.

David Brazier, Kent County Council cabinet member for environment and transport, said: "This is a really great offer for children who have a Young Person's Travel Pass and means that they will continue to benefit from affordable evening and weekend bus travel."

"The county council earlier this year agreed changes to the current bus travel scheme - the Kent Freedom Pass - in order to meet massive savings targets of £273 million over the next three years."

"This is a discretionary service, which means we provide it without any statutory obligation to do so."

"Research showed that 75-78 per cent of all journeys are made between home and school, so we focused our limited funding on the element that parents and pupils most valued. Now, thanks to the county's major bus companies, children will be able to enjoy even wider travel choices on their routes."

Sir Cliff cancels charity gig at cathedral after allegations

SIR Cliff Richard confirmed this week he has pulled out of a planned charity concert in Canterbury Cathedral next month.

His decision follows allegations of an historic sex assault of a young boy at an event in Sheffield in 1985.

The singer - real name Harry Webb - has strenuously denied all allegations and vowed to fight all the claims.

But on Tuesday night he

confirmed one casualty would be a planned performance at a fundraising event staged at the cathedral on September 26.

A spokesman said: "He is sorry for any disappointment or inconvenience caused but he did not want the event to be overshadowed by the false allegation."

Police raided Sir Cliff's home in Berkshire last week following the allegations.

Train firm Southeastern appoints new chief executive

TRAIN firm Southeastern has confirmed it has appointed experienced executive David Statham as its new managing director.

He replaces Charles Horton who announced he was to quit to become chief executive of the new Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern (TSGN) franchise.

Mr Statham, formerly MD of train firm First Capital Connect

(FCC), will take up the post on September 15.

Mr Statham said: "I'm delighted to be joining the team at such a critical time and looking forward to building on the firm foundations laid by the current management team."

Southeastern is currently in talks with the Department for Transport to extend its franchise contract to 2018.

Pupil highs and lows as GCSE results released

STUDENTS across the county will this weekend be reflecting on their GCSE results, with scores across Kent expected to mirror the national average.

Results were published on Thursday, with national trends demonstrating a dip in pass rates as a consequence of changes introduced to the exams to make them tougher.

Kent County Council was still calculating countywide

figures when we went to press. Roger Gough, cabinet member for education, explained: "There is quite a lot of variation in performance between the schools, which I think reflects a number of the big changes."

In Medway, provisional figures suggested more than 59 per cent gained five GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics. Nationally, English results showed a dip, while maths saw improvements.



STAYING PUT: Barton Court

School scraps plans to move to Herne Bay

A GRAMMAR school which planned to relocate several miles from its traditional home has confirmed it has scrapped plans after costs spiralled.

Many parents had reacted with anger after chiefs at Canterbury's Barton Court Grammar School revealed they were looking at plans to move the school to Herne Bay.

It would have moved into a purpose-built modern site on the area of what was Herne Bay Golf Club.

But after a meeting on Wednesday night, governors confirmed it has now rejected the proposal to move in 2017 after "very careful consideration".

The school had been offered the land free of charge by local developer Mark Quinn.

Chairman of governors Dr Peter Klappa said: "We are no longer actively looking to move to the coast and are concentrating our efforts on improving best we can the facilities on the current site. Governors felt that the funding gap between what we could raise and what we would need to spend had become too much of a risk for the school.

"We realise that this will be welcomed by those living in the city while at the same time be a great disappointment to many families and young people on the coast."

Commuters prepare for yet another big price rise on season ticket costs

By Chris Murphy

editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

A PASSENGER group is heaping pressure on the Government to step in and limit increases to rail fares after it was revealed season ticket prices would leap above inflation again in the new year.

Commuters face a 3.5 per cent rise as of January. For a traveller currently paying £3,000 a year, that equates to an increase of £105.

Prices have steadily increased with hikes tied to the Retail Price Index.

Train companies are able to increase the leap by the RPI figure in July plus one per cent.

The RPI figure, confirmed this week by the Office for National Statistics, was 2.5 per cent.

Campaign group Passenger Focus demanded the Chancellor George Osborne considers blocking the full rise.

Director David Sidebottom said: "Our most recent National Rail Passenger Survey put passenger satisfaction on value for money among



ON THE UP: Southeastern trains

commuters on Southeastern services as low as 19 per cent.

"We hope the Government will step in again as it did last year, to ensure that train fares in England do not rise above the rate of inflation."

Some tickets could see an even steeper price rise, however, with rail firms allowed to raise some prices two per cent above average, as long as the average increase across the franchise holder's network does not exceed the 3.5 per cent.

Thanet North MP Sir Roger Gale said: "The time is long past when government ought to introduce some form of tax relief for long-distance travel-to-work costs.

"If HMRC can charge tax on the theoretical domestic use of a company car then by the same standard, HMRC ought to be able to grant tax relief upon the business expense, outside the Greater London council tax area, upon commuter travel that is at present paid for out of taxed income."

Southeastern, which says it will now begin work on formulating its prices for next year, said: "Government decides the average change to regulated fares each year.

"For a decade, successive governments have regulated to increase the share of rail's costs paid by passengers rather than taxpayers."

Jail for vicious attack which broke golf club

A 23-YEAR-old has been jailed for four years after viciously assaulting a teenager with a golf club.

Alfie Barrett, 23, of Main Road, St Mary Cray, was sentenced at Blackfriars Crown Court after pleading guilty to committing grievous bodily harm with intent.

Barrett attacked his 17-year-old victim at St Mary Cray station in November, walking up behind him and hitting him with the golf club.

He hit the victim repeatedly and kicked him as he lay semi-conscious on the ground.

The teenager was left with a broken elbow, a deep cut to his head and a bruised torso.

Det Const Steve Best said: "This was a brutal and sustained attack that left a young man with nasty injuries.

"When the weapon was recovered by officers, it was in two pieces, the intensity of the attack causing the head of the club to break away. This demonstrates the extreme force Barrett used to attack his defenceless victim."

Bank holiday set for cloud and showers

BRACE yourself for a wet Bank Holiday Monday with the Met Office predicting a day of gloomy weather, rain showers and cool temperatures.

However, the good news is that the rest of the long weekend is expected to be bright and dry with temperatures a mild 18C.

But on Monday the weather is likely to change, with rain and cloud heading in.

That could cause a blow to many families who were planning to mark the day with a final summer barbecue. It will also be a blow to tourist attractions, which will be hoping for one last big weekend before the school holidays draw to a close at the beginning of September.

The Met Office said: "Sunday will be largely dry and bright with light winds.

"Occasionally heavy rain will spread from the west on Monday with strengthening southerly winds. Further rain, occasionally heavy, is expected on Tuesday." It adds the weather is set to be changeable for the rest of the month.

London Bridge train disruption under way

A NINE-day part-closure of London Bridge railway station begins this weekend, with no Southern trains calling at the station until Monday, September 1.

It comes as part of Network Rail's massive £6.5bn Thameslink programme to improve rail travel through London - a key part of which is a major overhaul of London Bridge.

The result will allow more, and longer, services to travel to and from the county.

Southern operates services into Tonbridge and the Ashford to Hastings line.

The disruption is likely to affect up to 50,000 commuters every hour who normally travel into the station on Southern and First Capital Connect services. In addition, there will also be no direct trains to Gatwick or Luton airport stations from London Bridge.

Passengers are being urged to check their route into the capital and plan a different journey if needed.



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agenda

What will make next week's headlines...

Gills prepare for cup clash with Newcastle

GILLINGHAM are set to play in front of a rare sell-out crowd on Tuesday as they welcome Premier League giants Newcastle United.

The Priestfield club have a second-round tie against the Tyneside team in the second round of the League Cup - or Capital Cup as it is now known.

Tickets went on general sale on

Wednesday and were snapped up fast.

Newcastle, led by former Charlton manager Alan Pardew, are expected to bring down nearly 1,200 travelling supporters.

Manager Peter Taylor is clearly relishing the prospect of locking horns with one of the nation's top teams.

The club boss said: "It's lovely for



our supporters to see a Premier League team as big as Newcastle United and I'm absolutely delighted for everybody.

"We are really looking forward to it. It has created a real buzz."

Car park closes to beat anti-social behaviour

A MULTI-storey car park in Ramsgate is to be partially closed overnight in a bid to crackdown on anti-social behaviour, including vandalism, graffiti and dangerous driving.

Floors one to four of the building in Leopold Street will close between 7pm and 7am.

The closure will also apply to the two stairways, lift and

underpass.

The decision was rubber stamped by Thanet District Council's cabinet back in January this year following complaints.

It will swing into action as of Tuesday, August 26.

The ground floor will remain open providing motorists with 60 parking bays.

...also

Local & Live hits highs

MUSIC lovers will continue to flock to various venues across Tunbridge Wells for the Local & Live Music Festival on Monday as the four-day festival reaches a climax.

The free event is now in its ninth year and returns after a lack of sponsorship put its future in the balance.

Riding for Alzheimer's

A RIDING school in Thanet will stage a fundraising open day on Monday, to help swell the coffers for charity Alzheimer's Research UK.

The Nelson Park Riding Centre in Birchington expects around 1,000 people to attend. The fun starts at 9am.

Fire station's open day

VISITORS will get the chance to look around the first new fire station to be built in the county in almost 20 years next weekend.

The community event takes place at the station in Ash-cum-Ridley near Sevenoaks next Saturday between 10am to 4pm.

Festival build-up begins

ANTICIPATION will build this week ahead of the annual Faversham Hop Festival taking place next weekend.

To mark the occasion, a special festival beer, Queen Court Harvest Ale, has been brewed by local firm Shepherd Neame, official partner of the two-day event.

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Police morale at 'rock bottom' as the budget cuts bite deeper

Will there come a time soon when the force has to say there are duties it can no longer perform? With more cuts on the way, **Sarah Linney** asks whether the force and its staff will be able to cope...

MORALE within Kent's police force has never been so low as budget and staff cuts bite harder and harder, union and federation chiefs claimed this week.

Trade union Unison warned morale nationally among police staff – anyone working for the police who is not a front line officer – was at an all-time low, with a third of staff “very stressed”.

And Ian Pointon, chairman of the Kent Police Federation, says the picture among the rank and file officers he represents is equally grim.

“Morale is rock bottom,” he told KoS. “I have never known it as bad as this is.”

“And that is simply because we are trying to get a quart out of a pint pot. We are asking people to do more and more with fewer people.”

“It’s a stressful time, and I think it’s only going to get worse as the cuts bite.”

The cuts have been deep. Some 500 police officers have left the force since the last election and not been replaced.

As servants of the Crown, police officers cannot be made redundant, so this has had to be done through natural wastage – people retiring or leaving of their own accord. They are, however, also unable to take industrial action.

But police staff – who perform a huge variety of supporting roles, from taking calls in the control room to doing forensic investigations – do not have that protection.

“There is an added dimension for them as many of them have been made redundant. With the budget cuts there is always a risk of losing their livelihood,” Mr Pointon said.

“Nobody wants to have insecurity and unemployment. I imagine if I were a member of police staff it would be a very worrying time.”

Unison interviewed 3,335 members of police staff for its report.

The union says 68 per cent of police staff named an increased workload as the main reason they were stressed, with 60 per cent citing job insecurity, 52 per cent money, 50 per cent lack of support from management and 35 per cent work-life balance.

Some 55 per cent suffer from anxiety, 48 per cent are demotivated and 47 per cent suffer from insomnia.

“I think many of those you could transpose onto rank and file officers,” Mr Pointon said.

“Their pay has been frozen. The most they are getting is a one per cent pay rise. Inflation is outstripping any rise in income and we know energy costs outstrip the rate of inflation.”

“I fully recognise this is not unique to the police and is impacting on whole swathes of the workforce – lots of people have been subjected to pay freezes. And police officers haven’t got the worry of job insecurity.”

“But these are difficult times. Managers generally do whatever they can to try to support officers, but they are limited in what they can do within the budget restrictions. They can’t re-instate officers and staff as the money isn’t there to do it.”

He says the stress of the job means officers are no longer even keen to do overtime.

“If you put out an email asking people to work overtime or work on their rest day and get some extra money, officers don’t want to know,” Mr Pointon said.

“That’s a massive sea change compared with a few years ago.”

“When they have done their work, they want to go home to their family. They want time to recharge their batteries. They don’t want to pick up another pile of work and find they can’t cope with the paperwork.”

Inevitably, the cuts have affected the force’s ability to do what it is supposed to do – fight crime.

“We are at the point where the police have to say we can’t do this, we can’t do that, we have to stop doing that,” Mr Pointon said.

“There are consequences to cuts. Police station front counters have closed. We no longer go to the report of every crime because we haven’t got the people to do that.”

“We tell the public this myth that by spending less you can get more. It’s nonsense.”

To make matters worse, further cuts are to come.

Another 190 members of police staff, 100 officers and 25 PCSOs are to go as part of £20 million of cuts that Kent Police has been ordered to make by April 2017.

This will leave the force with just 3,100 officers – a number Mr Pointon says is ridiculously inadequate.

“In 1985, we had 2,850 officers. Look at how the world has changed in those 30 years,” he said.

“We had no mobile phones and no internet – so no online paedophiles. There were many things that the police just didn’t deal with. The mantra



STRESS: Constant budget cuts are eroding numbers and spirits within Kent Police, says Ian Pointon (inset)

“If you put an email out asking people to work overtime to get some extra money, officers don’t want to know. That’s a massive sea change...”

Ian Pointon,
Kent Police Federation

for domestic abuse was don’t get involved, whereas rightly it is completely the reverse now and we proactively try to prosecute the abusers.

“You can’t police the 21st century with the numbers of the 1980s. If there are more cuts after that, I think we will reach a point where we are very much a response service, like the fire service, and will struggle to do a lot of the proactive work we do targeting prolific offenders.”

He says the cuts to police staff have impacted directly on officers’ workload, as well as their morale.

“For example, we used to employ civilian crime investigators who would take witness statements – thousands of them in a 12 month period,” he explains. “That was a huge help, particularly to detectives who were investigating the crime.”

“They got rid of those, but the work was still there. Those statements are now taken by police officers, which slows the system down. The work doesn’t go away, it just gets distributed around everyone else.”

“The government is increasing overseas aid, and there is a view that some of the countries that receive it don’t need it and that much of it is abused. No one is going to convince me that every penny is spent in a very philanthropic way.”

Chief Constable of Kent Alan Pughsley said: “Like other forces across the country we are operating with fewer staff, but we have never lost sight of the fact that our people are our most

important asset and we continue to make sure that they are supported in the workplace.

“That support includes flexible working arrangements, investment in new technology and help with health and wellbeing. We continue to invest in our people, for example, through the recent launch of our first ever police staff career development scheme.”

“Periods of reorganisation and change are carefully communicated and chief officers regularly hold roadshows across the county.”

“We have an excellent working relationship with the local Unison branch and hope that this continues long into the future to ensure that our staff are well-equipped to deliver the best possible service to the people of Kent, but just as importantly, that they get the most out of us as an employer and feel fully supported throughout their Kent Police career.”

“Investing in people who work for Kent Police is a very important strand of my leadership and will continue to be so for as long as I am chief constable.”

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KENTISH apples face the threat of a flood of cheap imported fruit from Eastern Europe this year after Russia imposed import restrictions in the light of recent international condemnation over its involvement in the Ukraine.

It has led experts and industry chiefs to warn that producers could be left with rotting fruit if retailers opt for cheaper imported fruit from the likes of Poland, rather than home-grown produce.

The unlikely threat emerged after the European Union, supported by the US, introduced economic and trade sanctions on Russia following President Vladimir Putin's apparent support of rebels in the east of Ukraine, which culminated in the downing of Malaysian airline MH17 amid claims rebels were responsible.

In retaliation, Russia blocked all imports of certain foods – one of which is apples – from Europe and the US.

Kent is the single biggest producer of apples in the UK.

Adrian Barlow, from the apple industry producers' group English Apples and Pears Ltd, told KoS: "The ban is going to include all of Europe's apples.

"That isn't a direct issue for Kent's apple producers as we have never really exported very much of our apple crop from the UK. But it could have a serious indirect impact on our growers as, if other producers aren't able to get rid of their apples, they could end up trying to sell them here.

"There has been quite a large apple crop in Europe this year, with Poland producing greater numbers than in recent years so it could turn into quite a serious issue."

Steps have been taken to try and mitigate the possible problems, with many of the main players in the industry holding discussions as to what can be done.

Adds Mr Barlow: "There's been a general agreement that producers need to act sensibly and not create panic in the European apple market, as if that happens we can't be sure what the impact could be on producers.

"As a direct result of these sanctions imposed by Russia, a number of European countries have spoken with the European Union, which has agreed to release funds that will shore up the markets affected."

The European Commission has decided to designate 125 million euros to support EU producers of perishable fruit and vegetables.

The budget for the programme will last until November, and the EU has said it will examine whether the markets will need more money when it ends.

EU agriculture and rural development commissioner Dacian Ciolo said: "All farmers of the concerned products – whether in producer organisations or not – will be eligible to take up these market support measures where they see fit. Acting early will provide an efficient support to the price paid to producers on the internal market, help the market adjust and be cost-effective."

But Mr Barlow is still concerned for the county's crop.

He said: "Even with these measures, Kent's apple market could still have some issues if there isn't enough money available, or it doesn't reach the right places."

Are our apples under threat from cheap imports?

A trade block on European foods imposed by Russia's Vladimir Putin following rising tensions in the Ukraine could see growers faced with competition from a glut of cheap, unsold fruit from other member states, reports **Jamie Weir...**



FEARS FOR MARKET: Ed Martin

And the failure to sell all of the county's apple crop could have a knock-on impact on Kent's rural economy.

The group Rural PLC was set up in 2011 to show the value of Kent's rural economy. Its board members are drawn from organisations such as Hadlow College, East Malling Research Centre and accountants Chavereys.

It aims to set a market value on the rural economy, similar to a share price on a traded marketplace.

Apple production plays a major part in it.

According to Rural Plc's latest report, just one of the apple producers in the county has created 1,200 jobs and added a gross value contribution in excess of £10m each year to the economy.

Director and former Kent NFU chairman Charles Tassell said: "It's likely that this will hit the local rural economy. But we're hopeful that even though there may be supply dumped

on the market from Polish growers who can't get rid of their stock of apples, things will be OK.

"Most of our apple growers have been investing in growing technology and techniques and that's meant that we are producing incredible apples which can compete at the highest levels.

"So it then becomes a consumer decision, and we just need to make sure that marketing the crop is right so that everyone remembers to buy local apples, rather than ones which have been grown elsewhere in the world.

"Apple production is really crucial to Kent's rural economy. It creates jobs and filters money through the wider county economy, so it's key that everyone is doing all that they can to support the county's growers."

The growers likely to suffer are the smaller producers, who aren't as able to sell their apples at lower margins

because they don't produce them in large enough quantities.

Ed Martin is manager at Produced in Kent, an organisation which champions local food and drink producers.

He said: "If apple prices start to drop significantly, then it's likely that cheaper imports will come in. That could really damage our market in Kent and our smaller apple growers in the county could see a really hard year ahead.

"What we need is for retailers to guarantee that English apples will be protected and they won't just jump on cheaper imports. That will be the big question. Whether supermarkets will take up the cause of locally produced food and make sure that our industry is protected, or whether they will simply go for the least costly option."

Last year, supermarket giant Sainsbury's had the largest market share for sales in the UK, selling 30.7 per cent of the country's apples.

A spokesman said: "We have worked closely with our British apple and pear growers for many years and more recently have specifically focused on making sure we offer our customers tasty apples at great value

"We are committed to putting British grown apples and pears on our shelves during the British season where possible provided the quality meets our customers' expectations."

Ironically, it comes ahead of what is expected to be a bumper crop in the county.



THREATENED: County's apples

Adrian Barlow, from English Apples and Pears, adds: "The apple crop is about three weeks ahead of schedule, and that's great. It means that we will be able to get apples on the supermarket shelves quickly this year, which may mean that sales take off.

"The apples this year also have outstanding eating qualities. That's due to a combination of the right amounts of sun, and rain, which has made them juicy but also crisp.

"I think we will have an outstanding harvest this year and we will have produced some superb apples in Kent.

"We may also be insulated from the worst effects of Russia's sanctions because China, which produces around half of the world's apples each year, has had a particularly bad year. Their crop is down by around 6 per cent, so I'm hoping that the issue isn't as bad as it might be.

"But what is certain is there will still be an effect, and the longer we have these sanctions levied against us, the worse that might become."

House cost is 17 times the average town wage

TRADITIONALLY London is held up as the most expensive area in England to live – but now it seems it has rivals when it comes to affordability.

A new survey by the National Housing Federation compared the average wage with the average house price.

And in a list of the highest areas, Sevenoaks, deep in the west Kent commuter belt, comes in at fifth.

The average salary of £23,442 would need to be multiplied a remarkable 17 times to afford the district's average house price – a cool £399,540.

And when you consider the average mortgage lender will give you a maximum of around three times your salary to buy a house, it underlines why there is such a housing crisis in many areas.

Rupert Connell, a partner at estate agent Knight Frank in Sevenoaks, said he is not surprised by the report.

He told us: "We have seen prices in the town go up quite dramatically and even gazumping has reared its ugly head again."

Gazumping is when sellers pull out of a sale, despite agreement, when a new buyer emerges and bids a higher price.

Mr Connell said: "The reason Sevenoaks is so popular and why house prices tend to move upwards is because of our proximity to the City."

"The vast bulk of our higher net-worth individuals tend to be employed in the City because we are literally 25 minutes away on the train."

"The two main draws here are London and the great schools, because we tend to attract families."

"There is a high demand for properties and a slow supply, so prices will climb quite quickly. We have got some big earners in Sevenoaks."

"Since the slump in 2008 and the market bottoming in January, 2009, prices in the south east have risen by about 20 per cent, on average."

"That is quite dramatic, but there will be areas in Sevenoaks that have risen by more than that and, of course, areas that have gone up less."

"It is significant that we have seen some competitive sealed bids for properties recently, and gazumping."

"These are things that used to happen before the slump. This is happening simply because of the lack of supply of property and high demand."

It is an issue which is forcing more and more local people to have to move out of the area they grew up in, and is preventing younger people from getting on the housing ladder.

The report found that in London, the latest full-year figures show the average wage is £39,920, while the average house price is roughly 10 times greater at about £400,000. So while the house prices are higher than, say, Sevenoaks, the wages average out higher too.

That compares with top of the league for costly living – south Buckinghamshire – where in towns like Amersham and Beaconsfield, the average home (£563,032) is worth 20 times as much as the annual local salary (£27,903).

Next in the list is the Cotswolds, followed by Chichester in West Sussex and Waverley in Surrey, then Sevenoaks.

Further down the list, the next Kent region is Tonbridge and Malling where you'll need a mortgage 11.9 times your salary, with houses at £295,920, and earnings of £24,918 on average. It places it 38th in the table.

Even Dover is 8.7 times more with homes at £196,321 against earnings of £22,464, putting it at 79th in the table of just over 100 authorities.

Sevenoaks council is at pains to

“It's popular because of the links to the City. We have seen prices in the town to up quite dramatically and even gazumping has reared its ugly head again”

Rupert Connell,
Sevenoaks estate agent



SOARING: West of the county homes far out pace the average salary

show it is doing all it can to provide affordable housing to those that need it.

A spokesman for Sevenoaks District Council said: "Although prices in the district are among the highest outside of London, we are working with developers and housing associations to increase the supply of affordable housing, which currently makes up approximately 15 per cent of the district's housing stock."

"Our local planning policies require developers to provide a proportion of affordable homes in new schemes, or for smaller developments, to make a financial contribution towards local affordable housing."

"We work closely with all our local housing associations to provide more affordable homes and recently we launched a new shared home ownership scheme with the Moat Housing Association to allow people on low incomes to purchase homes on the open market."

"We are also working with private landlords to bring empty homes back into use. These homes tend to provide more affordable rents."

Steve Humphrey, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council's director of planning, housing and environmental health, said: "The council recognises that the

affordability of housing across the borough is a severe problem for those households aspiring to home ownership in their local areas."

"The council's independent strategic housing market assessment for this year identifies the impact of local house prices increasing faster than household incomes."

"Rural housing-need surveys commissioned by the council provide the intelligence to inform decisions on the tenure, type and size on new build developments."

"Working in partnership with parish councils, developers and registered housing providers the council has been able to bring forward the de-

“We're not complacent, but the affordability 'gap' seems to be widening and funding for accessible housing is even more challenging to secure”

Steve Humphrey
Tonbridge & Malling council

velopment of a range of affordable homes in rural areas, including rented to shared ownership and shared equity properties.

"Such developments have assisted households to get a foot on the housing ladder and addressed local housing need by prioritising those with a local connection to the rural area."

"The council is continuing to achieve high levels of delivery of a range of affordable housing in the borough."

Last month saw the welcome announcement that Tonbridge and Malling has received the highest level of funding from the Government within Kent for the future supply of affordable homes up until 2018, with over £7 million of capital grant funding allocated for this purpose.

The officer added: "The council is also pleased to have enabled the highest number of new affordable homes built within Kent last year, alongside the most successful implementation of the government's Help To Buy initiative within the county for shared ownership homes and equity loans."

"But the council is not complacent as the affordability 'gap' seems to be widening and funding for affordable housing generally is ever more challenging to secure."

In Dover, Conservative MP Charlie Elphicke said: "These figures show why it's so important to have more homes in the right places. And why Help to Buy matters so much to help people get on the housing ladder."

A spokesman for Dover District Council said: "Dover offers excellent value for money, with a range of housing options, a growing housing stock, easy access to London, and a fantastic coastal lifestyle that is seeing growing popularity."

"A range of key projects is bringing major investment into the area for the future."

■ What do you think? Are you struggling to stay in the area you grew up? Have you already had to move? Or are you being forced out of Kent altogether? Join the debate and share your views. Write to: The Editor, KoS, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford TN25 1PP. Or email editorial@kosmedia.co.uk.



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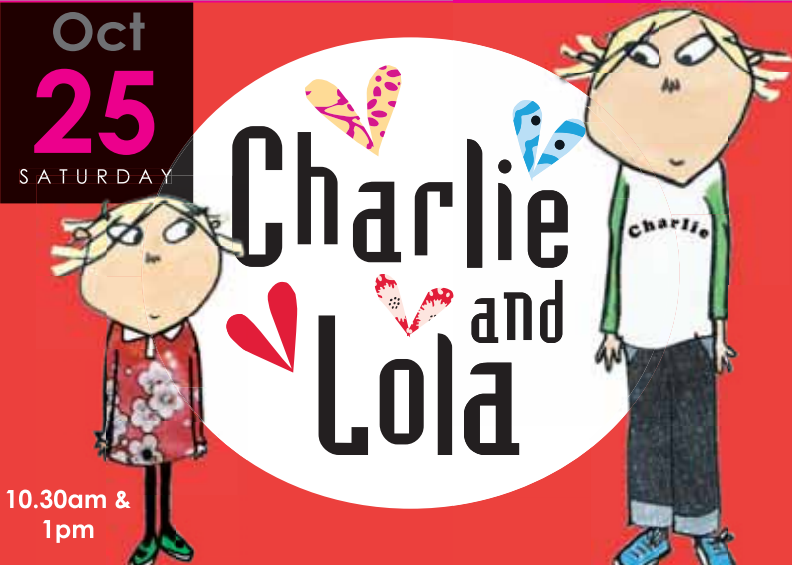
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Still running up that hill: Music's reclusive Kate Bush set for first shows in 35 years

Her last live performance was in 1979, but now the
acclaimed Welling-born singer and songwriter is
about to embark on a 22-date residency at the
Hammersmith Apollo, reports **Caroline Read...**

ON TUESDAY, the diminutive dark-haired figure of Kate Bush will walk out on stage for the start of her first live shows in 35 years.

Now 55, the acclaimed, yet reclusive, singer-songwriter was just 20 when she last performed, fresh off the back of enormous success with her timeless single *Wuthering Heights*.

Tuesday's performance at London's Hammersmith Apollo will be the start of 22 dates at the venue – with all tickets for all shows snapped up in just 22 minutes – such was the appetite for the star.

It is a remarkable achievement for a woman who grew up in Kent – and recorded some of her most famous albums in a recording studio at the back of her family home in the county.

Yet despite her global success, and devoted following, the star has kept a remarkably low profile ever since – only making the rarest of public appearances and just a handful of one-off live performances.

Following those shows in 1979, she said she felt 'a need to retreat as a person' after the six-week tour. Other rumours as to her unwillingness to perform live have included a possible fear of flying, stagefright, and the memory of the death of her lighting director, Bill Duffield, who was killed in an accident at the Poole Arts Centre during the tour.

But in a rare interview with Mojo magazine in 2011, the singer explained that her years of silence on the touring circuit were simply down to the sheer exertion of the ordeal.

"It was enormously enjoyable but



KATE BUSH: DISCOGRAPHY

- *The Kick Inside* (1978)
- *Lionheart* (1978)
- *Never for Ever* (1980)
- *The Dreaming* (1982)
- *Hounds of Love* (1985)
- *The Sensual World* (1989)
- *The Red Shoes* (1993)
- *Aerial* (2005)
- *Director's Cut* (2011)
- *50 Words for Snow* (2011)

physically it was absolutely exhausting," she said.

"I still don't give up hope completely that I'll be able to do some live work, but it's certainly not in the picture at the moment because I just don't quite know how that would work with how my life is now."

But now, for whatever reason, she has decided to perform on stage again with a residency at the Eventim Apollo venue in London which will span three months – in total 22 nights with a capacity of more than 3,500

people each night. It's something her long-term fans could have only dreamt about.

Born in Welling – then part of Kent but now under the London borough of Bexley – in 1958, Catherine Bush was the daughter of a well-to-do English doctor and his Irish wife.

Raised at their farmhouse in East Wickham she was surrounded by music from an early age and learnt to play her father's old church organ in the barn while she was still very young.

She was bullied at school, the Catholic St Joseph's Convent Grammar School in Abbey Wood – the site of which would become the former campus of Bexley College in the 1980s – and told friends that music was her escape.

By the time she was 10 she was already writing her own songs. One of her most famous pieces, *The Man With The Child In His Eyes*, was penned when she was just 13 and went on to

win her an Ivor Novello award for song writing.

David Gilmour of Pink Floyd is credited with discovering the young singer, who at the time considered herself more of a writer than a performer, after he was passed a rough demo tape of her recordings.

In 1973, she recorded some tracks in his home studio but record companies thought she wasn't commercial enough, claiming her haunting songs were 'morbid'.

Eventually, Mr Gilmour funded a professional recording of a three-track demo and played it to the head of EMI's pop division. This was all while Ms Bush was still at school.

It wasn't until 1976 that she finally signed with EMI, with a caveat in her contract that she would have to work on her voice and take some coaching.

She also took up dance classes and would later become known for her eerie dance and mime performances. By this time, in her late teens, she had moved out of her family home at East Wickham Farm and was renting a small flat in Brockley near her two older brothers – both musicians.

When she was introduced to the world it was with the dark, evocative single *Wuthering Heights*, from her debut *The Kick Inside* album.

Oddly, it hadn't been the record company's choice for her first single but Ms Bush loved the song and, despite her youth, stuck to her guns.

The single reached number one in the charts and she was compelled to perform on *Top Of The Pops*. Later she would say of her performance: "It was like watching myself die".

But her fans loved it; the wailing

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voice, the wafting hair, the theatricality of it all.

She was talented, beautiful and mysterious and in the late Seventies and Eighties she was by far the most popular female singer in the country.

Live appearances followed, none of which she seemed very comfortable with, and a rapidly produced follow-up album, *Lionheart*, was re-released in late 1978 at the request of her record label.

She has often voiced her dissatisfaction with *Lionheart*, feeling that she needed more time to get it right, and although it spawned several hit singles – most notably *Wow* – it didn't go down as well with fans or critics as her debut.

Her first and only tour would begin in April 1979, comprising 24 performances in the UK and mainland Europe.

Called *The Tour Of Life*, she performed songs from both *The Kick Inside* and *Lionheart* and the stage shows were such big productions they involved complex choreography, ground-breaking lighting and 17 costume changes per show.

Famously her sound engineers created the first headset microphone for her out of a wire coat hanger and radio mic, all because of her insistence on dancing while she sang.

She released another five albums over the next 13 years, including her best-selling double platinum *Hounds Of Love* in 1985, which the hit singles *Running Up That Hill* and *Hounds Of Love* came from.

Work on the album had begun in

June 1983 in a 48-track studio in an old barn next to her parent's home in East Wickham.

It would cement her reputation as an artist and catapult her to the top of the charts around the world.

A year later she duetted with Peter Gabriel on the classic *Don't Give Up*.

But in 1993, after the release of her album *The Red Shoes*, Ms Bush went underground.

This period of her life had been a troubled one and she had suffered several bereavements – most notably that of her mother Hannah, to whom she had been exceptionally close.

She was reported to be taking a year off from the music business. In the end it would be 13 years before she recorded another album.

In a rare television appearance, she was interviewed on Michael Aspel's talk show. She told him: "Those first few years were very intense. It was quite overwhelming really.

"I felt very exposed publicly I suppose. I just wanted to retreat and work on my music."

So secretive had she become that by the late 1990s she had totally removed herself from public view, prompting the Press to label her reclusive, introverted and often eccentric.

In fact, so little was known about her life at that time, the news she had become a mother was only leaked by Peter Gabriel at an awards ceremony five years after her son Bertie had been born.

She made a comeback in 2005 with the album *Aerial* and again in 2011 with *Director's Cut* and *50 Words For Snow*.

She told friends that she was just trying to give her son as normal a childhood as possible but the spotlight was never a comfortable place for the woman who had described public life as "very stressful".

These days her neighbours in Berkshire say the star, worth an estimated £30 million, lives so quietly that there are long periods when they think she has moved out.

Along with her husband, guitarist Danny McIntosh, and their teenage son, she lives such a private life that she's rarely even seen.

She's said to work late into the night in the recording studio in the grounds of her house.

A mysterious musical genius who has only been spotted at a handful of awards ceremonies in recent years and who refused to pose for photographs last year when she received a CBE from the Queen, Kate Bush must now be preparing herself for the concerts of her life.

With thousands of tickets snapped up in just minutes when they went on sale at the end of March, the *Before The Dawn* shows will give Kent's Kate Bush, who once said she'd like to perform again before she became "too ancient", a chance to prove once and for all what's she made of.

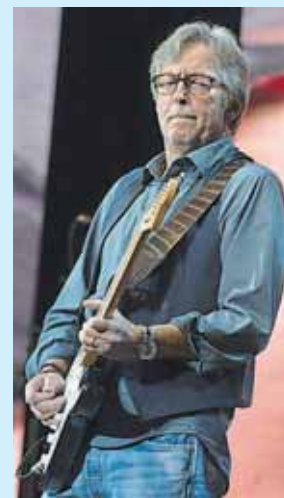
Unpredictable, surreal and verging on mystical, who knows what Kate Bush is busy dreaming up this time?

■ Kate Bush plays 22 shows at London's Hammersmith Eventim Apollo starting on August 26 to October 1. Tickets cost between £49 and £135. All shows are sold-out.



AMONG THE FAMOUS NAMES WHO HAVE WORKED WITH KATE BUSH ARE:

Elton John (above)
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THE first time I spoke to Sir Roger Gale was during a phone call about Manston Airport.

He shouted at me. So when I go to profile him in person, I'm apprehensive.

But as he walks in to the coffee shop on Herne Bay seafront where we've agreed to meet, just a few minutes late, he apologises profusely, and insists on buying me a cup of tea.

"I've had rather a busy morning," he says. "I had to phone the radio and have a fight."

A viability report had that morning been published about the troubled airfield, and 70-year-old Conservative stalwart Sir Roger, MP for Thanet North since the seat was created in 1983, is furious. And, not for the first time, his views are played out in the media.

He may run a little hot and cold in the way he speaks to the journalist calling him for a quote – he can at times be a master of the patronising quip – but he is, if nothing else, one of the most accessible, and therefore vocal, politicians in the county.

He also has a quite remarkable background which has seen him in acting, DJ-ing on pirate radio and TV production.

In 2012, he was knighted for his public and political services.

Love him or loathe him, you will have an opinion on him.

And certainly over recent months there has been lots for him to comment on.

Not least the saga over Manston Airport.

He hailed the arrival of Ann Gloag last year – when she bought the airport for £1 with big claims of breathing new life into it – along with everyone else and then found himself turning against her when she closed it and refused to sell it.

The airport remains locked up and the arguments locked down amid frantic behind-the-scenes attempts to try and come up with a solution for the site.

It's become his cause celebre, amid accusations that his public announcements are very much politically slanted. He's supportive of the Labour-run Thanet District Council's investigation into serving a compulsory purchase order on the site – but critics suggest it puts him in a win-win position.

If the council opts not to push forward with the plan, he and his Tory colleagues can say it was the administration which let Manston die. If it is a success, he can share in the reflected glory. Very handy political capital with a general election just around the corner.

It's a claim he denies vociferously.

"My interest in Manston has nothing to do with the election. I am furious with Ann Gloag, she lied to me.

"The day she got Manston she called me to talk about night flights, and said she was going to keep the place going for at least two years.

"She then told me she wanted to sell it, and turned down three perfectly good offers from American investment firm RiverOak."

It's fair to say he lives and breathes Manston right now. I tell him I'm becoming obsessed with it myself.

"Don't," he says wryly. "It'll ruin your life."

Despite my reservations, he has the



Sir Roger Gale: Pirate radio DJ, actor, reporter and Tory MP

Since 1983, he has represented the people of Thanet North after a fascinating winding road led him to Westminster. In a special profile interview, the politician talks to **Maria Chiorando** about juggling his personal and private life, pets, his adopted county, and, of course, Manston Airport

charisma all politicians need. He's frank, chatty and friendly.

As a long-standing Tory backbencher, it is easy to overlook a quite remarkable road which would eventually take him to Westminster.

Born and bred in Dorset, he had originally dreamed of joining the merchant navy.

But after being diagnosed as colour blind when he was 15, he was forced to look elsewhere.

Seeing an advert for the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, he got in on a scholarship, then supplemented that with earnings from his

“I was a jobbing actor for a while, but had some interesting jobs. I played Lorenzo to Kate O'Mara's Jessica in an off-West End version of The Merchant of Venice...”

Sir Roger Gale,
On his careers before politics

job in a Wimpy fast-food bar. He soon secured some work in mainly off-West End productions.

"I was a jobbing actor for a while, but had some interesting jobs. I played Lorenzo to Kate O'Mara's Jessica in an off-West End version of The Merchant of Venice, and did a couple of bit parts in Z Cars.

"The whole thing was a riot. "I was good, but I wasn't brilliant, and I was seeing friends like Edward Fox becoming stars."

But life's twists and turns would prompt another change in direction.

He joined the pirate pop ship Radio Caroline in 1964 and after a stint

there would be a key player in the creation of Radio 270 – a pirate radio station in Yorkshire.

He recalls of his DJ career: "I read the New Musical Express and the Melody Maker, and realised I knew nothing about pop music.

"I learnt about it, but that was the difference between someone like Tony Blackburn and me.

"He was living it. As someone who trained as an actor, I was playing at the part of a radio DJ."

His private life saw changes too. He first married when he was 21, but it floundered just three years later and the couple divorced.

Three years later, he married wife number two. When she became pregnant, it made him, once again, re-think his career options.

He would join the BBC.

"I needed money so I applied to the BBC for an assistant job.

"They said no because I was over-qualified, but asked if I had ever thought about being a reporter.

"They sent me on a training course.

"It was very basic, 'this is a microphone,' that sort of thing."

His political interests had been piqued as a result of what was dubbed the 'Prague spring' – a three month uprising in 1968 which saw Czechoslovakia break free from the Soviet Union, only to be eventually hauled back behind the Iron Curtain.

Determined not to see his children grow up under a communist regime he became a keen Conservative supporter.

But for now, his career was growing at the BBC.

"I did it for two years, and was doing OK," he says. "I went on to produce a news programme with three other people.

"There was a Marxist, a socialist and two Tories.

"We never fell out over politics, and together we made Newsbeat [Radio 1's flagship news programme]."

Never one to stand still, he then moved into children's television.

"I was an average director, but a good producer," he recalls. "One of the things I worked on was Multi-Coloured Swap Shop [the influential Noel Edmonds fronted Saturday morning children's show]."

While at the BBC he became active in politics and, in 1982, he was given six weeks' leave to go and fight the Birmingham Northfield by-election in 1982.

"I lost it and was furious," he says.

"My boss at the time didn't particularly like me, and thought I was leaving for good. When I got back, I was put in a shoe box to develop TV.

"You could call it gardening leave."

But just a year later his desire to reach the House of Commons was achieved.

As part of the evolving constituency covering Thanet – it had shifted from being the Isle of Thanet seat to Thanet West and East – in 1983 it became Thanet North and South.

Roger Gale was the Tory candidate. His victory was comfortable, beating into third place Labour candidate Cherie Blair, the wife of Tony Blair.

He joined at the peak of Margaret Thatcher's reign and was at the heart of an administration which dramati-

-cally overhauled the nation. The has been a safe Tory stronghold ever since. Not that he's always been a cliched Tory.

"The Conservative Party is perceived as being the party of the landed gentry, but that is rather outdated," he says.

"I was brought up in rural Dorset. I am a man of Dorset steeped in rural traditions.

"I can milk a cow by hand, and I can layer a hedge. But I have never seen the point of fox hunting.

"It's true that foxes can make mayhem, but there are humane ways to kill them.

"Hunters say that it only takes a second to kill the fox, but that's after chasing it to the brink of absolute terror and exhaustion.

"Seeing an animal ripped to shreds like that is not my idea of fun."

His love of animals is something which has only developed over the years and he remains a vocal supporter of animal rights.

He's also been an opponent to the transportation of live animals – another issue which continues to enflame emotions with regular exports shipped out of the port of Ramsgate.

At his home, he has three dogs and seven cats.

A home he share with third wife Suzy - who also acts as his assistant.

He mentions her frequently with a very clear warmth and affection. They have been married since 1980.

He explains: "People ask me if I employ my wife. Where else would I find someone who would work

“I work an 80 hour week, every week. On holiday, I take work with me, so I don't end up with a cupboard full of post to answer when I get back.”

Sir Roger Gale,
On hard work and holidays

those hours for that money? "We work well together. We have had our ups and downs, and been through the rough patches, but we still love each other.

"We had an outbuilding that the office was in. I woke up one night and Suzy wasn't in bed. I looked out of the bedroom window, and saw the light from the office reflected onto the lawn. I realised she was in the office.

"I went down there, and she was crying. 'I have to get the work done,' she was saying, 'and I just can't keep up.'

"Then she told me: 'I think of you as a source of work'.

"I suppose I was too obsessed with my work and myself, and at that moment, I suddenly saw the writing on the wall.

"Things had to change, so we moved the whole operation, so she was no longer working from home, and that helped."

When I ask if he is a workaholic, he considers for a second.

"Yes, I suppose I am. I work an 80 hour week, every week.



"On holiday, I take work with me, so I don't end up with a cupboard full of post to answer when I get back.

"I am a workaholic, and if I don't get re-elected, I will have to find something else to do or I will die."

Despite his Dorset roots, he is fiercely proud of his connection to Kent.

"I am an honorary Man of Kent, and I will stay here forever.

"My eldest son and his wife had to move up to Lincoln, and we go up there twice a month to see them.

"My other son and his wife live with us, along with my 93-year-old mother."

The focus now is on the upcoming election, about which he is sanguine.

"When you have been an MP as long as I have, you have nowhere to hide," he says.

"The voters know who I am, and they like it or they don't."

TORY STALWART: Sir Roger as young man at Radio Caroline (top left and right) and today. The MP is also well-known for supporting animal rights

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Bouncing baby bison born at wildlife park



Pictures: DAVE ROLFE

FOUR IN FOUR: Keepers at Port Lympne Wild Animal Park are celebrating their latest addition... a bison calf born this week. The calf will join a herd being used to re-establish the species in Europe

KEEPERS at one of the county's top wildlife parks have welcomed another new arrival – a bouncing baby bison.

The calf born this week makes it four new additions to the bison herd since May.

All the calves are female, which chiefs at Port Lympne Wild Animal

Park, near Hythe, say will help form a key part of the park's future breeding programme.

Bob Savill, head of hoofstock at the park which is operated by the charitable Aspinall Foundation, said: "We are all over the moon with our new additions and it's fantastic that in four months, we've welcomed four calves."

"We've recently teamed up with

other institutions in Europe to reintroduce European bison to the Carpathian mountains, so these new girls are a very welcome addition to our herd and mean that we can continue this valuable work in the future."

The European bison, or Wisent, was once widespread throughout Europe and parts of northern Asia but by 1900, hunting for skins, horns

and sport had driven them to virtual extinction in the wild. With the onset of the First World War and the Russian Revolution, the last two remaining herds were wiped out.

However, some of the species survived in zoos and thanks to a captive breeding programme there are now more than 3,000 alive today and several herds have been established in

semi-wild conditions in Russia and eastern Europe.

Added Mr Savill: "It's incredible to think that this species was once teetering on the brink of extinction, every birth is a very welcome addition to the herd."

Visitors to the reserve will be able to see the youngsters in the bison paddocks with the rest of the herd.



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MORE than 10,000 people watched fascinated as the world's only two remaining airworthy Lancaster bombers graced the skies over Kent last weekend.

The Combined Ops show at Headcorn Aerodrome drew its biggest ever crowd as a Lancaster from the RAF's Battle of Britain Memorial Flight was joined by its sister bomber from the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum.

The mesmerising display was the first time the two iconic aircraft, accompanied by a Spitfire and a Hurricane, had flown together in 60 years.

The Avro Lancaster, which was first flown in 1941, is probably the most famous of the Second World War bombers and was made famous in the film *The Dam Busters*.

To fly in one was a horrifically dangerous – the life expectancy of a Lancaster pilot was on average just 10 to 12 trips.

The Canadian plane is in the UK for a two-month programme of flypasts and air show displays and was one of several aircraft which entertained the crowds at the two-day event, along with a De Havilland Vampire and a Dakota bearing distinctive black and white D-Day markings.

Military re-enactments, military vehicles, people in 1940s uniforms, 1940s entertainers, jive dancers and stalls selling everything from vintage clothing to old ammunition meant there was more than enough to do. There was even the opportunity to ride in a warplane or a tank.

The event, now in its sixth year, is organised by the Invicta Military Vehicle Preservation Society in con-



Roaring back to life

Thousands turn out for Combined Ops military show and enjoy the rare sight of a pair of Lancaster bombers flying together. **Sarah Linney** joined the crowds...

junction with Headcorn Aerodrome.

Steve George, proudly dressed in 1940s regalia, said he had been looking forward to it hugely.

"My earliest memory is being allowed to climb into a Lancaster at the age of five in 1960. I was awe-inspired," he said.

"I grew up hearing stories from my

father, who went over on D-Day. He could never understand me collecting all this stuff but I have seven garages and four lock-ups full of it.

"I think it's important that we talk to the veterans now while we still can, and that school children come to events like this where they're not just looking at pictures.

"When I was at school we weren't taught about the wars. It was kind of swept under the carpet – I think it was too soon afterwards."

Help the Heroes volunteer, Adrian Proctor, said he thought the show had been a big success.

"Talking to the crowd, everyone has thoroughly enjoyed it. Ninety per

cent of people said they were definitely coming back next year," he said.

"It is a good place to bring the kids. it's an interesting place for children to come and it's topical."

Combined Ops spokesman James Baxter said: "Every year this event goes from strength to strength as we add more displays and activities."

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Pictures: DAVE KING/RICHARD FOORD/ALAN NAPIER



COMBINED OPS: The show featured soldiers, vehicles and aircraft from different countries and different eras as well as static displays and flypasts

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FOR many, the thought of snakes slithering through the undergrowth will send a shiver down the spine.

Yet Kent has a population of a relatively harmless snake and there are growing concerns that their numbers are slipping to a dangerous low.

One of Britain's most iconic yet misunderstood species, the adder has seen its numbers drop in recent years.

Not helped by many people's fears of the creature, wildlife experts say it has been the victim of bad press over the years and should be cherished, not feared.

"Adders have always had a bad rap, ever since Biblical times," says Mike Phillips, a project officer for the Kent Downs and Countryside Partnership.

"In this country, we're not used to animals that could be potentially dangerous

"And the media are often guilty of spreading irresponsible stories about snakes, which give them an even worse reputation."

Hot spots for adders in the county are the Kent Downs, Riverside Country Park in Rainham, near Gillingham, and parts of west Kent as well as some coastal areas.

But it could not be more different to the sometimes venomous and violent image it has developed over the years.

"Adders are certainly not vicious," says Rick Hodges, secretary of the Kent Reptile and Amphibian Group (KRAG), which promotes and works to conserve, protect and increase the understanding of reptiles and amphibians.

"You just cannot use that word in relation to them. They are very shy.

"You do have to treat them with respect. Most people who get bitten just found one and picked it up, which is very unwise.

"They are especially docile when they are cold.

"As they are cold-blooded, they like to heat up to around 30 degrees, at which point they can get a bit more feisty.

"But the death toll from adder bites is totally negligible – bees and wasps kill a lot more people a year.

"The last recorded death from an adder bite was in 1975."

Sue Young, of the Kent Wildlife Trust, agrees: "Very few people are actually bitten by adders, as they will usually disappear when people come near them.

"It is the old cliché, they are a lot more scared of us than we are of them."

It is thought the number of adders in Kent may only just topple into four figures.

Ms Young adds: "Adders are in decline. It's mainly to do with habitat loss; they prefer heathy, open, grassy spaces, so they can bask in the sun, but they do need some shelter."

Mr Hodges adds: "The adder is now considered a 'Red Data Book species', which means that there is concern about their conservation status.

"There has been a drop in numbers, but what we are seeing is that where we have adders, the numbers are the same as before.

"So in the places where they have been established, we are finding just as many, but in some places there are not any, any more."

Mr Phillips agrees.

He says: "It's the numbers of places where you actually find adders which is going down.

"They are declining across the country and are totally extinct in some places, for example Nottinghamshire.

"They are on the verge of extinction in some other counties, such as Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Greater London.

"The problem is that once they have become extinct in one area, it's very difficult to recolonise that area."

As with so many other species, it is the destruction of their habitat that is the main problem.

Mr Phillips says: "Land management techniques mean that there are less untidy areas now, which are better for them to hide in.



ADDERS: Two female adders showing colour variation (above) and a juvenile adder (opposite left) and two male adders in combat (opposite right)

Declining numbers of adders leave iconic snake species in peril

They've 'had a bad rep ever since biblical times' but the county's population of these misunderstood creatures is falling fast, as **Maria Chiorando** reports

"There is also a real pressure placed on them because of habitat fragmentation."

Ms Young of the Kent Wildlife Trust adds: "Fragmentation really is a big problem.

"Adders need a reasonable amount of terrain to forage around in, and if their habitat is fragmented, by a road, for example, they don't have enough space.

"Adders are not good at crossing roads, and you sometimes see them as road kill.

"We do have adders in the Kent countryside, and what we have to do is protect where they live."

Mr Phillips says: "There are adders living in parts of the Downs, it's a good habitat for them.

"Adders seem to like areas with pre-draining soils, we're not sure why, but chalky and sandy areas are good for them, although they are more commonly found in heathy areas."

"They like what is known as mid-successional habitats," says Mr Hodges.

This is a phase in the development of plant growth in habitats.

If habitats are over-managed or grazed, there is less plant cover for the snakes, which can leave them vulnerable to attack.

Adds Mr Phillips: "They have a few predators, for example buzzards, pheasants, badgers and foxes.

"They are venomous and most animals are wary of them. But having said that, they can't always use good defences due to the way they

are attacked.

"For example, if a bird is pecking them on the neck, it's going to be difficult for them to bite the bird.

"When they are being hunted, their first response is to get away."

"They really are creatures that have to struggle against the odds," says Mr Hodges. "It is very cold in northern Europe for cold-blooded creatures, yet they manage to survive, and they are also able to survive in the Arctic Circle.

"They are extraordinary, and they have very interesting life spans."

Their life span depends on the weather and food supply amongst other things.

It takes the males about three years to be-

come sexually active, and about four years for females.

Once females are sexually mature, they reproduce, but if they do it too soon, they will probably die.

Adders only give birth every other year, generally mating in April or May, and having, on average, eight live offspring (as opposed to eggs) in late summer.

Mating is often preceded by the males fighting, the victor going on to impregnate the female.

"After mating, females will not eat again until after they have given birth to their young in August," explains Mr Hodges.

"They then only have until October to eat enough before they go into hibernation.

"They will not survive hibernation without a high enough body weight.

"If they mate later in life, they will have had time to have gained the extra weight, and will be able to survive the hibernation period."

Males do not have this issue, and can reproduce every year.

This is not the only difference between the males and females; the females tend to be larger, reaching around 75cm to males' 60 cm, and are brownish in colour, whereas the males are more silvery.

Mr Hodges says: "If they do well at the beginning of their lives, they are more likely to

“ The adder is now considered a ‘red data book species’ which means that there is concern about their conservation status. There has been a drop in numbers... ”

Rick Hodges, the secretary of the Kent Reptile and Amphibian Group (KRAG)



ADDERS: FRIEND OR FOE?



THE adder is the only venomous snake native to Britain.

Adders have the most highly developed venom injecting mechanism of all snakes, but they are not aggressive animals.

Adders will only use their venom as a last means of defence, usually if caught or trodden on.

No one has died from an adder bite in Britain for more than 20 years.

With proper treatment, the worst effects are nausea and drowsiness, followed by severe swelling and bruising in the area of the bite.

Most people who are bitten were handling the snake.

Treat adders with respect and leave them alone.

SOURCE: FORESTRY COMMISSION

live to a good old age. There have been cases of males living for up to 40 years. Unfortunately, the average life span for a male is only six or seven years.

"Female adders have an even tougher life, and their life expectancy can be even shorter."

Gender differences aside, they are also individually unique.

"Once you recognise the individual adders you see that each one is different," explains Mr Hodges.

"They all have unique markings on their head and neck.

"You know where they go so you can watch them in their usual places, you see who is mating with who, they all have their idiosyncrasies, and you become very fond of different individuals."

Mr Phillips: "We are always trying to educate people and have found that adders' image has changed a bit – people are becoming more accepting of wildlife in general."

Mr Hodges adds: "Adders are important in so many ways. My life is more interesting because there are adders in it.

"And they are an important part of the circle of life. They are eating things and being eaten.

"They are part of what is quite a fragile ecosystem in Kent."

Ms Young adds: "They are stunning animals, and many people find them very attractive.

"They are iconic."



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Strap yourself in: Dreamland is all set for a ride into the future



NEW DREAMS: Dreamland director Eddie Kemsley is looking to 2015

By Maria Chiorando

maria.chiorando@archant.co.uk

STROLL past the iconic Dreamland site in Margate this weekend and you may be surprised to learn that at some point next year, the doors will open on a heritage theme park set to become one of the county's most popular tourist attractions.

Because while the plight of the site has created acres of news print over recent weeks, months and years, there is, as yet, precious little evidence of the huge changes which are set to transform the rather desolate looking area.

The fire-hit Scenic Railway – originally opened in 1920 and the oldest surviving rollercoaster in the UK – remains a key landmark, but devoid of the laughter and excitement it once generated for generations.

The message from those working tirelessly behind the scenes, however, is not to be fooled.

And soon their confidence will be demonstrated as major physical work begins.

The re-birth of Dreamland is just around the corner, they insist.

Eddie Kemsley is the director of Dreamland.

"All we can say at the moment is that we will be opening in 2015," she says, "We'll be announcing exactly when later on this year.

"At the moment, we are in a construction phase. We are doing an asbestos strip out, and clearing and bulldozing lots of the site."

The Dreamland complex includes the park and surrounding buildings, including the old cinema.

It is being financially supported by the local council and the Heritage Lottery Fund. At the helm of the design is Wayne Hemingway, creator of the Red or Dead label, and company, HemingwayDesign.

Adds Ms Kemsley: "The Scenic Railway is still looking pretty poor, but work is on schedule to get it up and running.

"There has been lots of work going on off-site over the past few months, with design meetings and planning, but now we are gearing up to start the physical side."

For many that work cannot come soon enough. Its history has, to coin a cliché, been a rollercoaster ride (see box).

Adds Ms Kemsley: "We are going to be running open days, so that the public can come and get a glimpse of what's going on.

"Obviously health and safety have to come first, but there will be opportunities to see the development of the site.

"It is going to be a really unique offering. The vision is absolutely amazing, it's full of objets d'art – people are going to be surprised.

"Wayne Hemingway has been fantastic.

"He has a very strong vision, he always challenges the status quo, and I am really enjoying working with him.

"He's totally dedicated, and absolutely committed to Dreamland.

"I talk to him every day, and he's down here in Margate all the time."

Along with the Turner Contemporary on the sea front, it forms a key cog in the regeneration of Margate and Thanet as a whole.

If it works, it should pull in thousands daily.

While Ms Kemsley is remaining tight-lipped about the details at the moment, there have been some hints as to the vision.

"We're looking at the idea of Dreamland through the decades," she explains. "It is going to have a really interesting, vintage feel.

"We often have the conversation here as to where will Dreamland sit? What other attractions can we compare it to?

"I think it will stand alone.

"It really is totally unique, it is such a special place, which crosses all sorts of boundaries."

Until the park opens in 2015, there is the Dreamland Expo.

Run by the Dreamland Trust, the expo is open during the summer holiday and at weekends.

There will be events going on over the coming months, and it's a good way to get a glimpse of Dreamland past and future.

A HISTORY OF DREAMLAND AND ITS DECADES OF THRILLS AND SPILLS

MORE than 200 years ago, the site of where Dreamland now sits was a saltmarsh, like so much of the Kent coastline.

But in the late 19th century, as the seafront saw its first development with a seawall and new road, a restaurant and dance hall were eventually built there in 1863.

After a series of owners, the first amusement rides were installed in 1880 before it was taken over in 1919 by John Henry Iles.

He changed the name to Dreamland and built the Scenic Railway rollercoaster, which remains today. In its first year, it carried nearly half a million fun-seekers.

Three generations of the Iles family – John Henry, Eric and John were to control Dreamland from 1919 until its sale in 1968 to Associated Leisure, who sold it in 1981 to the Bombom Brothers from Holland, who renamed it Bombom Brothers Theme Park.

They turned it into one of the top 10 most visited attractions in Britain in the 1980s, scrapping the pay-as-you-go pricing structure and introducing an entry fee for access to all the rides. They introduced the looping Shooting Star, the Mary Rose rotating ship and the big wheel – the biggest of its kind in Europe at the time.

But as Margate declined as a tourist destination, in 1996 Dreamland was sold to businessman Jimmy Godden who also operated the Rotunda Amusement Park at Folkestone and Ramsgate's Pleasure Park.



Just seven years later he said the space would become a commercial and residential one, a decision that was unpopular with locals, who wanted to see the park continue as a leisure destination.

A government report looked into it, and as a result, Dreamland was sold to Margate Town Centre Regeneration Company, with Godden retaining a 40 per cent stake, in 2005 for £20m.

Campaigners, however, insisted it be revived and plans were first touted for it to become a heritage amusement park – a showcase for a form of entertainment which continues to entice huge crowds.

All the rides, aside from the Scenic Railway

which has Grade II-listed status, were removed, with many going into storage.

An arson attack on the Scenic Railway in 2008 left the structure damaged, with some left irreparable. Security at the site was stepped up.

With little activity on the site, the council, under pressure from campaigners, looked to ensure one of the most high profile sites in Margate could be developed.

After a drawn out legal battle, a compulsory purchase order was successfully served by the council and the park eventually put into the hands of the Dreamland Trust.

It allowed work to begin on finally reviving one of the county's best-loved theme parks.

■ DREAMLAND made headlines earlier this month, when some of Blackpool's iconic illuminations were donated to the redesign, giving a tantalising glimpse of the vision bosses are working towards.

Graham Cain is Blackpool's councillor for tourism and leisure.

He said: "Drawing on our shared amusement park heritage, Blackpool Council has offered a helping hand by donating some classic illuminations to the project.

"They include light fountains, giant snowflakes, angels and devils, sparkling light features and other decorative items."

Iris Johnston, Labour leader of Thanet District Council told KoS: "Many years' ago, Blackpool was approached about sending some down, so to have them here makes me very happy.

"Everyone has worked so hard to make it happen."

Explains Eddie Kemsley, director of Dreamland: "We are delighted to have the Blackpool illuminations, and would love to get more items like this.

"We're appealing to people who may have any of these kind of artifacts in their garage, in their gardens, anything around their houses that are from old amusement parks.

"An object you have may be fairly uninteresting to you, but our design team could get really excited about working with it."

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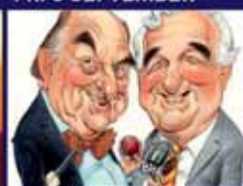
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Fears grow over rising number of thefts of pet and working dogs

KENT is the second worst region in the country for dog thefts, according to figures published this week.

And it is feared some animals are being stolen to order, with crooks targeting particular breeds in particular households.

Some even claim dog thefts have been on the rise since metal theft was clamped down on hard – with crooks changing their focus.

According to Shooting Times magazine, which surveyed police forces around the country, the county came second only to London.

It revealed, in 2013, some 128 dogs were reported as stolen. In London the figure was 165.

Yorkshire was the third worst area, with a figure of 123.

Worryingly, the figures have nearly doubled over the last 12 months.

Now owners are being advised to ensure their pets are microchipped and even to consider installing CCTV to protect their pets.

A spokesman for Kent Police said: "We have seen an increase in the number of dogs reported stolen between 2012 and 2013.

"The figures are 68 in 2012 up to 128 in 2013."

Nic Oakley is the spokeswoman for national organisation DogLost, which keeps a database of lost dogs and tries to reunite them with owners.

She said: "Dog theft is taken seriously in Kent, and police will separate dog theft from property theft, which accounts for the high numbers of dogs recorded as being stolen in the county.

"It's a very nasty crime, as dogs are generally family members. It's not like stealing an iPad. Even if the animal is a working dog, there is probably a good relationship there. The thieves don't consider this impact."

So why is the county so high on the list?

The manner in which the crimes are recorded could explain it.

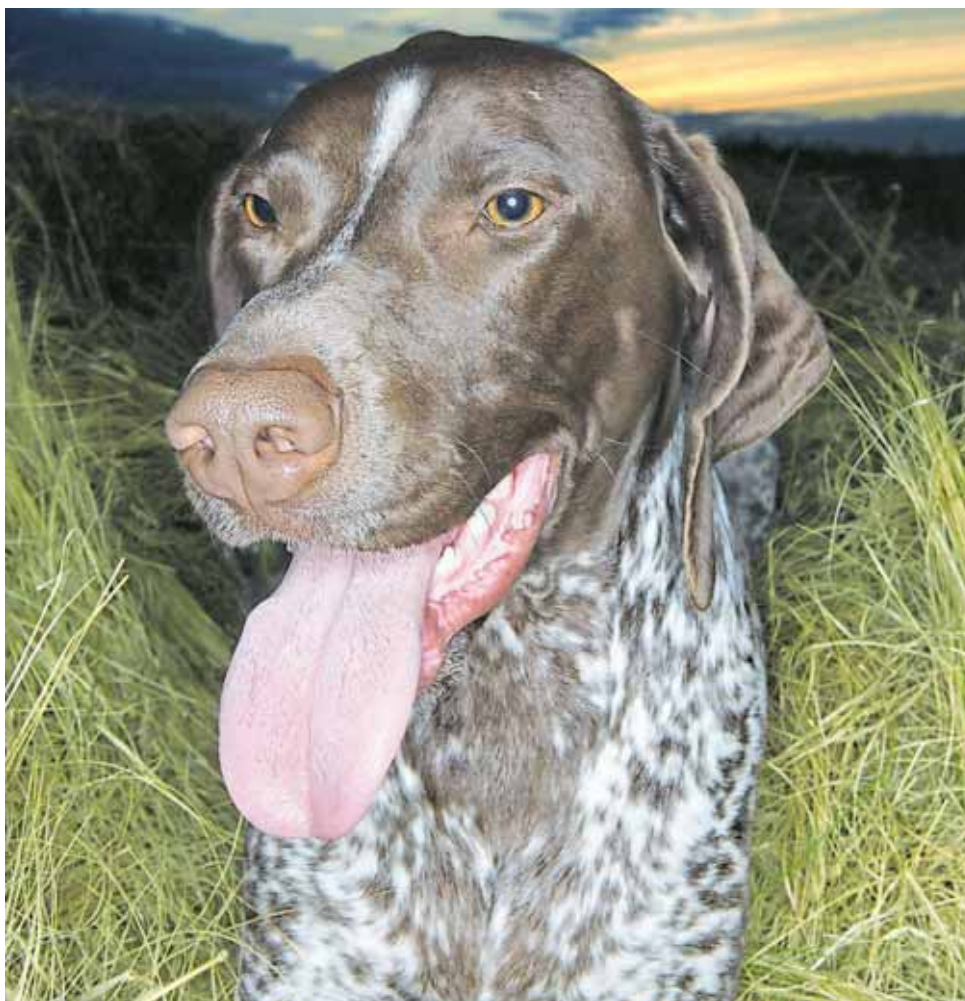
The police explain: "One factor is that Kent Police is recognised by DogLost and many owners as a proactive police force in terms of treating dog theft seriously. We investigate the report and record it appropriately."

Many of those animals reported stolen are working dogs.

The Country Land and Business Association (CLA), which represents rural landowners, says it is an issue its members are frequently reporting.

Director of the CLA's south east office, Robin Edwards, explained: "Kent has excellent transport links, it's very easy to get in, and then very easy to get back out again after stealing something, as it's so close to London."

Silvia Tabor is the spokeswoman for Dogs Theft Action, a national charity aiming to inform dog owners about theft, as well as reunite missing pets with their owners.



New figures reveal the county's working and pet dogs are being targeted by thieves. **Maria Chiorando** looks at why the problem is worsening and what can be done to reduce the risks...

She says: "I believe so many dogs are stolen in Kent because the number of gun dogs is so high, and a lot of working dogs are targeted by thieves."

The CLA's Mr Edwards agrees.

"I think one of the reasons people don't always report it is because they know who did it," he claims, "either the individual or the type of people, and they don't want to have to face these people in a courtroom."

"There are gamekeepers who have dogs taken and they are simply not going to take the risks of retribution of reporting the theft."

"The people stealing dogs are really nasty people – there is no such thing as a nice criminal, but this particular fraternity is one you would not like to bump into in a dark alley."

"A lot of working dogs live outside in kennels so are an easier target."

"What's really frightening is that sometimes dogs are stolen to order –

“The people stealing dogs are really nasty people – there is no such thing as a nice criminal, but this particular fraternity is one you would not like to bump into in a dark alley”

Robin Edwards,

Country Land and Business Association

you have a break-in at a particular kennel and only the most valuable dog is taken.

"This suggests thieves have been watching the dogs, and the households. They could be seeing the family going about their daily business, children

coming home from school and so on."

Ms Oakley, of DogLost, adds: "We have seen an increase in the number of dog thefts since there was a clamp-down on the theft of metal. The criminal contingent have turned their attention to people's pets."

"This is a facet of organised crime."

So what makes crooks steal dogs in the first place?

"First of all, there is the theft of designer dogs, which are then sold on the black market; this includes breeds like chihuahuas and pugs," says Ms Oakley.

"The second category is gun dogs, of which there are a lot in Kent."

"They have a high value and there is a large demand for them. They are often used for breeding."

Ms Tabor, from Dogs Theft Action, adds: "Another reason is that they sell them for dog-fighting. They are often used as bait."

The CLA's Mr Edwards says: "This is the absolute worst case scenario, but it does happen."

There are things owners can do to protect their animals.

A spokeswoman from the RSPCA south east told KoS: "We are warning people to be vigilant as summer months can see an increase in pet thefts, as animals are more likely to be left unattended outside."

"If the worst happens and a pet goes missing, the RSPCA suggest you check your home and local area thoroughly

"If the animal is definitely missing, register them with a company such as Pets Located, DogLost or the National Pets Register, and if you suspect your animal may have been stolen, contact the police."

"Call your microchip company so they can flag your pet as missing, as well as local RSPCA and other animal-welfare organisations, and your local vets."

Ms Tabor adds: "You have to act quickly, you want to make sure the dog is registered as lost while the dog is still in the area."

"And you do have a better chance of your dog being returned if it is microchipped."

Mr Edwards says: "From April 2016, microchipping will become mandatory."

"There will still be problems insofar as the dog will need to be scanned."

"You can get GPS collars, but these can be easily removed. I recommend alarming the kennel, and installing CCTV if possible."

"When you're out and about, don't leave dogs outside shops or in the back of open pick-up trucks."

According to the figures, a number of missing or stolen dogs are returned to their owners.

Ms Oakley says: "Last year about 12,000 dogs were reported to us as missing, not all of which would have been stolen, and we reunited about 7,200 of them with their owners."

"In about one third of these cases the dogs are being reunited in suspicious circumstances."

"For example, someone may have seen that there is a reward so phoned up to return the dog but say they bought it and want to give it back but don't want to be out of pocket."

One incident earlier this month saw dogs returned after a raid at an address in Chatham.

A police spokesman said: "Two suspected stolen vehicles as well as a suspected stolen bulldog were located at the property and seized."

"The dog was reported stolen from an address in Rochester in May, 2014, and will be returned to its owner."

Ms Tabor from Dogs Theft Action concludes: "The important thing is not to lose hope. I have one trustee who was reunited with her dog five years after it was stolen."

"These things can and do happen."

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Farage forced to make apology ahead of crucial Ukip meeting

By Sarah Linney

sarah.linney@archant.co.uk

UKIP leader Nigel Farage was forced into making a personal visit to a couple in Thanet to apologise after one of his senior party colleagues and fellow MEPs was caught on tape calling a Thai constituent a 'ting tong from somewhere'.

Janice Atkinson, who represents the south east in the European Parliament after securing a seat in May, made the remark about Fa Munday while canvassing in Ramsgate - where Mr Farage is almost certain to stand as an MP for Thanet South at the next general election.

A decision on that, is due to be made on Tuesday.

Ironically, Mrs Munday and her husband Vince are both members of Ukip.

Mrs Atkinson has apologised unreservedly for the remarks and said she "deeply regretted" her choice of words.

She was caught making the comment on a BBC microphone fol-

lowing an interview for the local news service.

As it began to create headlines, Mr Farage, from Westerham, waded in to pay a special visit to Mrs Munday and her husband to publicly apologise.

But it will be an embarrassing blow for him as he is pinning his hopes on winning the constituency, where Conservative MP Laura Sandys is standing down at the next election, and gaining his party's first seat in Westminster.

He was filmed visiting the Mundays in their home and offering them "mega, mega apologies".

"What was said was deeply offensive; wounding, I'm sure, to both of you; embarrassing for me; and I wasn't going to let it pass without coming to see you," he told the couple.

"Please do not think it's representative of our people. It jolly well isn't. I'm absolutely confident that 99 per cent of our people do not harbour those views."

Mr Munday replied: "It's lovely that you are apologising, but we don't hold you responsible.

"Mrs Atkinson, on the other hand, did a lot of wrong. When she spoke to me on the phone she wasn't apolo-

getic. She was quite belligerent."

He said that the couple would stay members of Ukip.

Mr Farage told Kent on Sunday he had been to speak to Mrs Atkinson.

"I told Janice that she had acted in poor taste and caused offence, and I think she understood that," he said.

A party statement added: "Ukip in no way condones language that may reflect prejudice or cause offence."

In a statement, Mrs Atkinson said she was "incredibly sorry".

"It was poor judgment and naivety on my part rather than words spoken with any malice," she added.

"I am devastated that I have caused hurt and apologise profusely to Mr and Mrs Munday."

Thanet Stand Up To Ukip (SUTU) - a group set up to fight Mr Farage's bid to secure the parliamentary seat - was also critical, describing the comments as "unacceptable casual racism".

Ukip party members in Thanet will meet on Tuesday to consider which candidate to select to run for Westminster in the 2015 General Election.

Mr Farage confirmed last week he would be putting his name forward.



APOLOGY: Ukip leader Nigel Farage has apologised for Janice Atkinson

By Sarah Linney

sarah.linney@archant.co.uk

KENT'S mining heritage will be celebrated at a free festival this weekend - with a special focus on the industry's contribution to the First World War.

The county's miners had to work extra hard at the start of the war to produce fuel for the Navy, which at that time was completely coal-fired.

But there was also a special role for those who were sent to the front - digging tunnels under enemy lines to lay explosives.

The frequently overlooked aspect of trench warfare, which formed a key part of Sebastian Faulks' best-selling novel and BBC TV drama, *Birdsong*, was back breaking work.

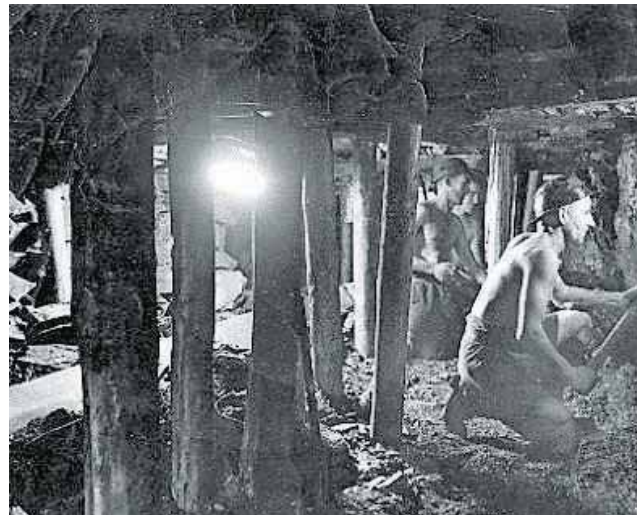
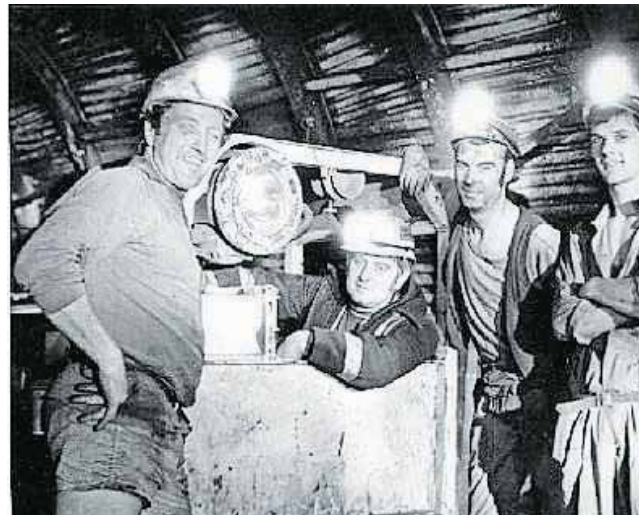
"A lot of people forget about the miners, but they played a massive part in the First World War," Kent Miners' Festival chairman Gary Cox explained.

"Not all the men who wanted to fight for their country were allowed to go and do so, because the job of getting coal out of the pit was too important. They couldn't let all the expertise go as coal was vital to the war effort."

But a couple of years into the war, the government realised just how useful men who were used to navigating and enduring the underground environment could be.

Thus the idea came about to tunnel under no man's land in a bid to plant explosives under the enemy lines.

However, the Germans were doing exactly the same, leaving a delicate and dangerous maze below the ground.



Mining history celebrated

"Trenches were not very nice places, but if you were a miner and used to tunnelling it would be second nature to you," explains coalfield historian Jim Davies.

"They had to do it very quietly because the Germans could hear them if they used automatic tools, so they just used to lie on a board and dig out the clay. The Germans were doing the same thing too, so they had to listen."

It was a perilous job. Thousands of tonnes of explosives were used and one explosion under the German

lines in Belgium was heard as far away as Ireland.

But it wasn't, says Mr Davies, any worse than anything else men had to endure in the war. In fact, it was possibly better.

"The most dangerous time was when the men went out over the top and were machine gunned down," he said. "If you were underground, at least you stood some sort of chance."

"A lot of people would maybe think it was claustrophobic and wouldn't fancy it at all, but miners would be

used to that sort of work. And by the time it blew up you were well out of it."

Adds Gary Cox: "People don't understand the dangers miners faced underground every day in their normal working life."

"They were always using explosives down the mine."

"That's what made us the type of people we are; a close-knit community where people look after each other. That's still what the community is like today."

Now in its sixth year, the free festi-

val - which attracts between 2,000 and 3,000 people - will run from 10am to 5pm on bank holiday Monday in the grounds of the Tilmanstone Colliery Welfare Club in Eythorne.

Ex-miners from each of Kent's former collieries - Tilmanstone, Bette-shanger, Snowdown and Chislet - will be at the festival with mining photos and artefacts, and organisers are hoping to have a model of the pit headgear.

Films, diagrams and stories will tell the tale of the First World War soldiers and their tunnelling heroics.

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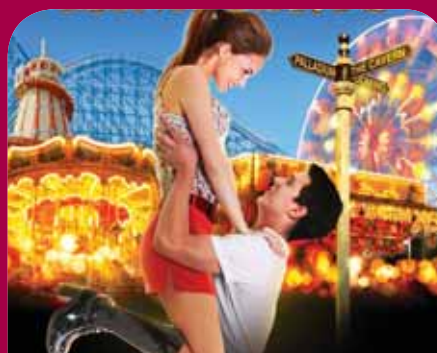
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Ferry's fateful voyage with first of the Great War's many injured

WHEN war was declared in 1914, there was initially a wave of patriotic fervour.

The British Empire still spanned the globe and our reputation as a fighting machine was impressive.

We had crushed many enemies and secured many major victories in many places.

So there was an assumption the Great War, as it would become known, would follow a similar outcome.

But on the afternoon of August, 27, the reality of the conflict arrived on our shores for the very first time.

Because on that day the first casualties from the frontline began to arrive back to Folkestone – the main port from which millions of troops left for the killing fields of France and Belgium.

We had barely joined the conflict when a ferry made the grim crossing back to Folkestone from Boulogne, with its cargo of injured soldiers.

The Battle of Mons – one of the earliest battles on the French and German border, saw wounded British troops loaded onto hospital trains and taken to Boulogne.

Kent historian Hazel Basford wrote *Gazetteer – East Kent in the Great War 1914-1918*, published by the East Kent Branch of the Western Front Association in 2008.

She told us: "The first casualties of the First World War to fall in France died on August, 21, 1914. Many more soldiers were wounded. The plans for dealing with casualties during those first few weeks were severely hampered by the speed of the enemy advance.

"The weather was hot. The reservists who had been called back to the Colours [regiment] were in new boots and clothing. Even those who survived and were uninjured suffered greatly during the first few weeks of fighting.

"On August, 27, 1914, one of the regular cross-Channel steamers – the afternoon boat from Boulogne – arrived in Folkestone with the first group of wounded British soldiers to be brought home.

"Although by this date more than 1,200 had been killed and many more must have been wounded, there were just 30 lightly wounded men on the boat. Their arrival was widely reported.

"It may be that they had been carefully chosen so as not to unduly alarm the public back home. If that was the case, the full horror of the losses being suffered by the British Expeditionary Force – highly trained infantry who could fire their rifles so quickly the enemy thought they were facing machine guns – could not be hidden for long.

"A decision was rapidly taken that hospitals should be set up in France near to the coast to take the severely wounded.

"This was practical since it would

As part of our on-going series of articles looking back to mark the centenary of the start of the First World War, **Chris Murphy** takes a look at an anniversary occurring this week – 100 years since the first casualties from the frontline started to return to this country via our county.



CASUALTIES: Many of those injured in the fighting returned to Folkestone and were cared for in, or near, the town

have been very difficult to transport such cases home to England.

"Eventually a very efficient system was established of staged medical units – from dressing stations near the front, through to the large hospi-

tals near the coasts. The smaller units nearer the front could be moved quickly if necessary.

"Throughout Kent, members of Voluntary Aid Detachments spent the first months of the War planning

their hospitals and completing their training in First Aid and Home Nursing.

"Promises of loans of equipment were sought from the local population. Some units were

desperate to set up their hospitals, but were told firmly 'Wait! The call will come when you are needed!'"

Tram-train campaign group The Remembrance Line Association, wrote: "There were about 30 men, nearly all of different regiments and most of them only comparatively slightly wounded in the legs, but not too seriously to prevent them from limping along without assistance.

"A few had to be carried to motor ambulances waiting to take them to Shorncliffe Camp."

Whether for the sake of public perception or not, the scale of the deaths to come would be unlike anything seen before.

In 1903, we lost a few hundred in the temporary invasion of Tibet and the year before, Great Britain suffered around 800 casualties in the Anglo-Aro War in Nigeria.

Some 8,000 died in the Second Boer War which lasted three years ending in 1902 – a great number dying from disease.

So what was expected to be little more than a scuffle in France and Belgium went on to become a massacre.

Weapon technology had moved on – artillery had more range, and the machine gun was capable of cutting down hundreds of men on both sides in just seconds.

The conflict would go on to claim the lives of some nine million military men and women, including almost one million from Britain. Many more were injured.

The port of Folkestone became the main British gateway to the front. Millions of men and women marched to the port with high hopes and aspirations they would soon be back.

Earlier this month, Prince Harry unveiled a huge stainless steel arch on the spot the soldiers passed on their way to the port on what has become known as the Road of Remembrance.

Tragically, it was also the port where the casualties returned.

JC Carlile, in his 1919 book, *Folkestone During the War*, wrote: "No town in England has a record of war work comparable with that of Folkestone.

"The coast-line from Dover to Hythe forms a strategic point of vital importance. It was not only the nearest to the fighting line, but the key-position to England.

"Looking back, it is wonderful to observe how little it suffered and how nobly it bore the strain of continual anxiety.

"Folkestone Harbour soon became one of the vital strategic positions during the war."

During the war, Folkestone saw the passage of 9,253,652 British officers and men, along with 537,523 Allied officers and men, and 846,919 Red Cross and other workers.

It also delivered 3,592 German prisoners of war.

THE BELGIUM REFUGEES AND THE ROLE OF QUEX PARK...

It wasn't just the British military being brought back to Britain. Belgian refugees were fleeing in numbers from their war-torn country and headed to Folkestone (see pictures, right).

They began to arrive in numbers in September, 1914, many staying in the port town or dispersing to other parts of the county and further afield.

Dartford was a particularly popular destination with many volunteers offering to house them.

By the time the war ended, an astonishing 65,000 Belgian civilian refugees had arrived to make Folkestone their temporary home.

Locals donated money and linen.

Author JC Carlisle wrote: "Among the more tragic and pitiful episodes of the early weeks of the war may be noted the arrival, at all hours of the day and night, of fishing-boats full of Belgian refugees, landing at the slipway opposite the fishmarket, being helped by the stalwart, kindly-hearted fishermen, whose wives had prepared bowls of hot soup, and other good souls who came out of the Radnor Street passages with steaming pots of coffee for the weary wanderers who had completed the perilous voyage in the darkness of the night and come to safety."



HISTORIAN Hazel Basford said injured Belgian soldiers were taken to Quex Park, in Birchington, Thanet.

She told us: "After the Battle of the Marne in September, 1914, when the Allies stopped the German advance into France, the focus of the war once again moved into Belgium. The Germans desperately wanted to break through to the Channel coast.

"The Belgian army valiantly tried to stop them, supported by men from the British Royal Naval Division at Antwerp. However, early in October Antwerp fell, the Belgians were forced to withdraw and more of their country was taken over by the invaders.

"In October, the British held the advance at the First Battle of Ypres and the Belgians at the Battle of the Yser. The enemy was also thwarted by the deliberate flooding of the extensive low lying land behind the coast.

"The Belgian army had suffered greatly, thousands of wounded were taken to the Channel ports and towns.

"The Times newspaper reported on October, 12, from Folkestone saying '...the state of affairs at Ostend owing to the transfer of the wounded at Antwerp to that town is very bad.... accommodation for 600 wounded is ready at Folkestone....

"The vice-consul telegraphed to London four days ago for permission for this accommodation to be used. Great difficulty is being experienced at Ostend ... owing to the lack of bandages, chloroform, and other medical necessities."

"Within days the British Government requisitioned all the Channel steamers and sent them to collect the wounded from Ostend and elsewhere. Kent VAD (Voluntary Aid Attachment) hospitals all over the county – and others further afield – were mobilised to receive them.

"The notice they received was very short but



all their planning paid off and within hours the hospitals were ready. For the VAD nurses, stretcher bearers and orderlies it was to be the beginning of four and a half years hard work."

There are exhibitions at the Powell-Cotton Museum at Quex Park, Birchington, to highlight the harrowing time.

'Welkom Vriend' tells the story of the mobilisation of local VAD detachments to receive wounded, the setting up of the hospital in two galleries of the museum and a room in Quex House.

The stories of four of the Belgian patients are told in some detail and supported by images from its photographic archive.

There is a further exhibition about life on the Belgian front line, supported by material from the 'In Flanders Fields' Museum in Ypres.

The exhibitions on the First World War will be in place until at least summer, 2015.

For more information, visit quexamuseum.org.

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The 6,000-year-old 'wooden Stonehenge' found by builders

Developers have unearthed a site of international historic importance on the outskirts of Sittingbourne. Reporter **Chris Murphy** delves into the past...

ARCHAEOLOGISTS have discovered what some have dubbed the remains of Kent's very own version of Stonehenge – dating back 6,000 years.

The Neolithic 'woodhenge' site was uncovered in Iwade, near Sittingbourne, by a housing developer.

It realised it had stumbled across something significant and has now contributed £50,000 to the examination of the site.

That job fell to Dr Paul Wilkinson at the Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company, also known as Swat Archaeology.

The Faversham-based firm could not believe its luck when it realised this was a genuine site of international importance.

Dr Wilkinson told us: "Persimmon Homes were brilliant and backed us completely.

"Although the site will be paved over eventually, they have allowed us amazing access – they have been extremely generous having seen the importance of it."

While Stonehenge is clearly made from stone, the Iwade version was made from wooden beams

Dr Wilkinson said: "They would have been around three feet in diameter and reaching up something like 20 feet.

"This site is significant because it is Neolithic which dates it right back to the earliest habitation of this area.

"We also found a Neolithic field system which is unique in the south east – there are no others."

He said the knowledge and science behind developing a henge was astounding considering how long ago they went up.

"The entrance is usually orientated with the summer solstice. So when the sun rises in the south east it shines into the centre of the circle.

"Of course there are no records and no one has survived to tell us, but we would presume there would have been some sort of sacred ritual.

"I was at Stonehenge a few weeks ago watching the sun come up with some students, and it is quite magical to be there in the middle of this enclosed site. You see the sun coming up at about 4.30am and illuminating the space you are in.

"The henge allows you to predict when the sun is at its lowest and its highest.

"Mid-summer day is when the solar world changes pace. It holds its breath and then starts again. To be able to work that in Neolithic times is an incredible achievement in its own right.

"And it's the same with the winter solstice. They could work that out along with equinoxes and phases of



Pictures: SKYSPIDER

NEOLITHIC CALENDAR? Iwade's 6,000-year-old wooden henge is 98 feet in diameter and was about 20 feet tall

the Moon. They watched the skies and translated the movement into these henges."

Dr Wilkinson adds: "We found the ditch and pottery around it, which helps date it. Soil samples have also been taken and are being analysed for a report to be released later this year."

The Iwade Meadows site has a 98 feet diameter and nearby the experts also found evidence of Bronze Age barrows, which were places for burial of important people. At Iwade, these had not actually been used.

The team also found evidence of a Neolithic 'sacred path' from the north east river crossing point at Kingsferry, extending to the

entrance of the outer ring. So would Dr Wilkinson have liked to have had the chance of recreating the henge to become a centre for curious visitors?

He said: "We are not in the same league as Stonehenge unfortunately – if we had standing stones there, then yes. There is nothing tangible for tourists to see, really."

WHAT IS A HENGE?

A HENGE is a circular or oval-shaped ditch with an entrance but there was more science involved in the placing of stone slabs or wooden posts than is often realised.

Position was everything as they could be used as solar clocks.

Often there was more than one circle, depending on the complexity of the idea.

Some have no ditches while others have as many as three.

Access to the central area was through formal entrances and the majority of henges have either one entrance or two opposed entrances.

The original purpose and function of henge monuments is not known for absolute certainty, but it is commonly thought to have been ceremonial or ritual monuments, as well as predicting the solar calendar.



Pictures: TANYA PREMINGER



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Women Seeking

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FEMALE seeking male for adult fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413809

68YR old widow, seeking company of a male, 68-75 for friendship, likes cinema, theatre, nights in, meals out, seaside walks. Wants someone to help me love again. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413689

MAUREEN, discreet sensual lady, 42yrs seeks daytime fun at her home. ACA. Tel No: 0905 002 1961 Box 405297

BBW 51, caring, solvent, seeks male of similar age for fun times and socialising. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413621

FEMALE 38, attractive, African, single mum, seeks male, 35-50 for nights out, socialising, friendship and fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412793

ANNA, busty mature lady seeks no strings discreet meetings with male any age or location. Tel No: 0905 002 1956 Box 366019

PETITE slim blonde 39yrs, pretty big blue eyes, looking for similar easygoing older male to put a spark back into my life, enjoy nights in/out and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412327

SUSIE discreet married lady, young 36yrs seeks uncomplicated times with man any age or area, all texts answered. Text only Box: 4459437

WIDOW 70, lonely, seeking gent, 70-75 to bring a bit of sparkle back in life, likes theatre, cinema. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412475

CHRISTINA, curvy beauty, 27yrs, own home, very very adventurous seeks no strings fun and frolics. Can accommodate and will answer all calls. Tel No: 0905 002 1957 Box 410127

KATIE 26yr old pretty slim blue eyed blonde looking for evening entertainment with open-minded discreet guy, any age. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412319

JANE 29yr old horsey female, loves the outdoors, cycling, as well as duvet days, WLTm not too serious male for a hopefully normal relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412315

ZOE, 25yrs, very naughty seeks man any age for broad minded no strings fun and games. Tel No: 0905 002 1933 Box 409719

FELICITY professional female, 32yrs, blonde, curvy, fun. Travels a lot and withm chap for occasional fun on my travels. Text only Box: 4459438

MARY 5ft 6in size 12 blonde, nice personality, good conversationalist, interesting, lots of interests. WLTm likeminded caring, happy male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412169

CLARE 36yrs successful single mum, independent, employed with OHAC, size 10, green eyes, pretty, likes swimming, family life, seeking male with similar values and interests. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412053

SUE, 38yrs, passionate, broad-minded and feisty seeks discreet fun with "mnr wrong". Aca. Tel No: 0905 002 1937 Box 413007

SHARON 32yrs and still soul searching for Mr Right, I enjoy keeping in shape, caring for people, seeking loving respectful guy who also knows a good time. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412049

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SLIM petite, attractive brunette, 56, British/Russian origin, excellent cook/home maker, seeks cultured male for serious relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412129

FREYA 33 ft blonde, loves dancing and have a good time, employed, own home, one son, seeking similar laidback guy/dad for dates, chats and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412045

MARILYN really nice curvy tactile female, loves romantic walks, cosy nights in, quality times, looking for nice male to spend time and fall in love with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411871

BLONDE pretty, long legged, voluptuous, blue eyes, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410585

JAN 5ft 6ins, dark hair/eyes, nice smile, likes music, travel, countryside, animals, employed, OHAC, looking for companionship with similar lonely heart. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411865

SARAH 25 petite slim attractive blonde student, enjoys keeping fit, looking good, socialising, going out, being a mum WLTm similar fun genuine guy. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411537

LINDA 37, green eyes, attractive, bubbly size 12, enjoys cosy nights in, text chats, seeking talish fun guy for meals out, pubs, clubs and spending quality times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411033

64YR old lady, seeking male for friendship, companionship, outings and interesting conversation. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411975

CAROLINE 39yr old pretty blonde looking for handsome caring man to put the sparkle back into my life and make each other feel special. Call me. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411891

33YR old sick of being single working mum, OHAC, likes the simple things in life, looking for romantic, honest guy with GSOH for cosy nights in and fun times out. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411887

CINDY 31 attractive, size 12 brown eyed blonde, new to this but sick of passing up potential soul mate so thought I wld give it a go. ACA Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411873

RITA divorced care worker with no ties, 5ft 1ins, dark hair, enjoys meals out, cosy nights in, seeking male 45-55 with GSOH and similar interests. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411775

JANET 5ft 8ins, slim 12, pretty, green eyes, brown hair, seeking male companion for friendship hopefully leading to a relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411689

MELANIE tall curvy attractive bubbly female who loves meals out, cosy nights in with a nice wine, walking, seeks professional male with outgoing GSOH. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411509

LYN 34yrs, pretty petite dark haired female, loves music, meals out, quiet drinks out, seeking caring male with GSOH who can make me feel special again. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410137

CAROLINE blonde curvy very active lady who loves to socialise, countryside, seeking similar caring male for LTR and to share good times with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409413

RACHEL 39, brown hair/eyes, 5ft 6ins, bubbly, outgoing, naughty, busty, divorced, seeks male for discreet fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410635

SUE attractive, likes walks, gardening, social drinks, looking for male to settle down with, 60's. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410231

LADY 60, size 12, easy going, likes animals, seeks male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411301

SUE optimistic divorced lady with OHAC, good job, enjoys meals out, cinema, countryside, pub lunches, looking for likeminded outgoing happy male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410467

CATHY very much a lady seeks gent up to 62yrs who would appreciate an independent professional sassy female who loves to be wined, dined and romanced. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410301

WOULD you like to bounce into spring with me and onwards? Widow late 60's, enjoy most things in life, looking for someone to enjoy them with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411395

SOPHIE 27yr old nursing assistant with no ties looking for discreet adult fun times with tall attractive guy 35-42yrs. GSOH essential. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410717

34YR single mum of 1 who loves nights out having a good time seeks similar sociable fun guy to enjoy relaxed but extremely fun relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410709

Men Seeking

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PAUL 56, 6ft, med build, I'm shy and really small seeks assertive genuine lady, age unimportant. Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4448741

RONALD 69, would like to meet lady to join him in dancing or learning to dance, he is slim 5ft 9, gosh, ns, Ramsgate area. Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4171950

KEEN cyclist 58, non-competitive, seeks similar female for sea wall, countryside ride, walking etc for fun, laughs and whatever. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413337

RETIRED engineer 67, likes meals out, nights in, holidays, seeking slim lady, 60-65, young at heart to wine/dine, friendship and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413039

RETIRED male, seeks attractive female for friendship and fun, any age/status/colour. East Kent, can travel. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413133

AMIABLE intelligent male, 77, light smoker, seeks slim lady for friendship/companionship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413127

MATURE male, looking for discreet meetings with female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413039

FRANK 54, 5ft 10ins, blue eyes, blond hair, smoker, seeking friendship with mature female, 40-60. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412893

COMPANY Director, mature, late 50's, seeking female, any age for mutually rewarding friendship, Kent/Surrey area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412819

IAN 5ft 11ins, likes rock/roll, singing, making people laugh, seeking someone special. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412799

WRITER tall, slim, dark hair, generous, seeking broadminded lady for fun times. Any age/status. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412749

BARRY divorced, 6ft, well built, seeking fun time girl for good times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412717

SINGLE young lady, slim-medium build, 24-38 sought by mature male in Canterbury. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 405697

MALE 48, looking for fun loving female to enjoy outdoor activities, nights in and meals out. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 392212

JAMES young, free and single, please give me a call if interested. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412345

EX headmaster, tall, dark, seeks adventurous lady, status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412263

MALE 49, 5ft 10ins, likes cinema, reading, walks, seeks female in the Thanet area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412235

BESIDE the Pointe. Literate self-possessing, legginess, kindred spirit sought by white male for elevating the bar. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412223

45YR old male, likes poetry, seeks companion for relationship. Herne Bay area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411993

CHIPS on the pier, walks on the beach/countryside, VGSOH, 58yrs old, fit male, seeks female for laughs and love and whatever. NE Kent. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411725

SUSAN 29 green eyes, dark hair, slim, looking for Mr tall dark and handsome to take me out, enjoy adult times without complications just fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410957

LAURA happy size 12-14, attractive, loves shopping, gym, music, clubbing, eating in/out, looking for sincere honest male looking for more than just good fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410713

KAREN blonde blue eyed slim 35yr old interesting female looking for good times, call me if are in a similar situation, board and looking for some fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410719

JANE pretty size 12, loves going out socialising, countryside, meals out, looking for no strings fun, nothing heavy, give me a call if you are seeking similar. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410579

WORLD war veteran seeking happy lady with nice conversation in the Kent area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411133

PAUL own business, looking for daytime fun with lady. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411227

DAVE 65, retired, N/S, likes gardening, music, meals out, holidays, seeks female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410971

DAVE 62, 5ft 10ins, slim, semi-retired builder, seeks no strings discreet daytime meets for adult fun. Surrey. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410899

MALE likes outdoor life, smoker, seeking local female for cosy nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410755

BRIAN 70, Maidstone, seeking female, 60 plus, likes meals out, cinema, theatre, days out and cosy nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410611

DEREK 5ft 11ins, slim-medium build, loving, caring, seeking black lady for possible relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410511

EARLY 50's single male, smoker, seeking likeminded female for company and to share life. Must have GSOH, like animals, walks, home made food and nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410441

41YR old male, dark hair, 5ft 11ins, easy going, likes music, guitar, seeking female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410411

BROWN eyed white mature, handsome male, seeking black female, 18-50 for discreet no strings adult fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410377

MALE seeking female to love and be loved back. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 408941



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ADVENTUROUS male, mid 50's, seeks similar lady for fun and mutually enjoyable discreet relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410339

CHRIS widower likes DIY, gardening, nights out, rock and roll, N/S, looking for LTR with female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410191

ATTRACTIVE white gent, 48, 56ft, romantic, easy going, GSOH, seeking young lady, 60-75 for quality discreet fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410025

DIVORCED male, seeks Oriental lady, likes animals, music, will take care of you forever. Thanet area, willing to travel. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409963

PROFESSIONAL male, early 40's, fun loving, OHAC, seeks warm, sincere female for LTR. Animals/children welcome. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409961

PROFESSIONAL male, early 40's, fun loving, independent, OHAC, seeks warm, sincere, fun loving female for LTR. Animals/children welcome. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409745

ADAM 48, single dad, bored, seeking fun and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 408421

TALL black male, 45, likes meals out, good company, romantic, GSOH, light hearted, seeks easy-going female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409621

RETIRED male, seeks no strings discreet meets with slim-medium build female, any age for adult fun. Dover. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409533

FIT fellow, full of fun, 58, seeks to find fanciable lady for free and fascinating future for LTR. Find your jar half full. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 405857

DAVE 50, likes holidays, meals out, socialising, easy going, seeks female 40 plus. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 408541

DAVE 50, seeks female of similar age for meals out, holidays etc. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 408415

RETIRED male, seeks no strings discreet meets with slim-medium build female, any age for adult fun. Medway area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 408343

RETIRED male, 66, 6ft 2ins, easy going, GSOH, loyal, loves pets, meals out, life, seeks lady for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407317

MALE 67, professional, fit, 5ft 10ins, medium build, reliable, tactile, likes most things, seeks slim lady, let's go! Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407855

STEVE 6ft 4ins, OHAC, seeking relationship, outdoor type, homey, wanting mutual good relationship with sexy woman. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407835

ANTHONY 48, athletic, enjoys country walks, seeks youthful female for friendship/relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407355

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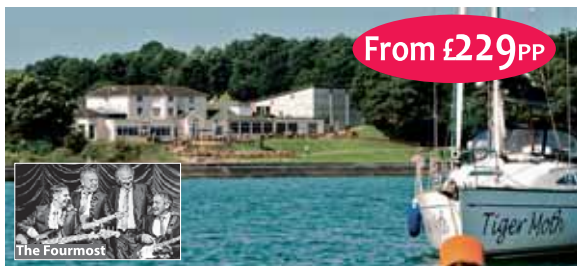
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Warner Norton
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Isle of Wight

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Drinks
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Fourmost

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Sixties

£10pp
Deposit

Over 40s
only

Quote SS11-KOS

3 nights half board-plus • Friday 28 November, 2014

Great Entertainment, Free Drinks, Free Car Ferry and a super location make Warner's Norton Grange resort, Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight, our most popular private Christmas Party venue ever.

INCLUDED: Free Bar from 6pm to midnight every night for house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers
● Entertainment
● 3 dinners & 3 breakfasts
● 3 nights en-suite **CHALET** - upgrades available
● Car ferry crossing worth £45

Warner Sinah Warren Hotel, Hayling Island



From £119^{PP}

Tribute to
Abba

£10pp
Deposit

Adults
Only

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With stunning views over Langstone Harbour and peaceful spots for relaxing, this gem on Hayling Island, near Portsmouth, has something for everyone. Relax or swim a few lengths in the heated indoor pool; enjoy the fun day-time activities then sitback and be entertained each night. Portsmouth's Gunwharf Quays is nearby and great for Christmas shopping.

INCLUDED: 2 nights sharing an en-suite bedroom with TV & tea/coffee tray
● 2 breakfasts & 2 dinners
● Full entertainment programme including a tribute to Abba
Note: This is not a GN private party.

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Warner Bembridge Coast
Hotel, Isle of Wight

From £229^{PP}

FREE
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6pm to Midnight

Rock Stewart &
Ultimate Elton

Mamma Mia!
the Movie

Abba Tribute
Band

£10pp
Deposit

Over 40s
only

Quote BE1-CON-KOS

3 nights half board-plus • Friday 9 January, 2015

Our private party extends the New Year festivities and takes us on a trip down memory lane at our favourite Warner hotel. Enjoy a gala New Year's Eve party with countdown to midnight and great entertainment.

INCLUDED: Free Bar from 6pm to midnight every night for house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers
● Entertainment
● 3 dinners & 3 breakfasts
● 3 nights en-suite **CHALET** - hotel upgrades available with rooms in main building from £259pp
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INCLUDED: Free Bar from 6pm to midnight every night for house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers
● Dance tuition, social dancing & a gala ball
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● 3 dinners & 3 breakfasts
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Swinging Sixties Seaside Party - Warner Corton, Suffolk Coast



From £209^{PP}

FREE
Drinks
6pm to Midnight

The
Fortunes

Union Gap

Frankie Valli
Tribute

£10pp
Deposit

Over 40s
only

Quote CW2-KOS

3 nights half board-plus • Friday 6 February, 2015

Join us for a private party that takes a trip down memory lane at Warner Corton, on the Suffolk Coast near Lowestoft. Enjoy live entertainment from The Fortunes, Union Gap, a Tribute to Frankie Valli, plus Free Drinks every night and lots of nostalgic fun.

INCLUDED: Free Bar from 6pm to midnight every night for house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers
● Entertainment
● 3 dinners & 3 breakfasts
● 3 nights en-suite **CHALET** - upgrades available from £234pp

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From £189^{PP}

99p
Drinks
6pm to 9pm

Enter-
tainment
Each Night

£10pp
Deposit

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TROUBLED TIMES: Harper Lee's work is set in the 1930s, the time of America's Great Depression. It is still relevant today, as shown just this week.

Genius survives forever... as, sadly, do the issues



To Kill A Mockingbird was brought into a contemporary limelight courtesy of a debate on education. Now a stage adaption comes to The Marlowe, writes **David Mairs**.

It wasn't the clincher, but Michael Gove's reported views on the place of American writing within the English literature GCSE syllabus sparked one of many debates about his suitability as Education Secretary... a position of which he was relieved by Prime Minister David Cameron last month. Gove, described in the national press as a "toxic liability among teachers", was one of several seemingly unpopular politicians to be culled by the Cameron axe in preparation for next year's general election.

He had been slated for apparently dismissing great American novels and, more importantly, denying this country's young people the opportunity of reading them at school.

Gove refuted the charge, saying he had been merely trying to promote the merits of British literature and broaden the range of work studied by pupils. Indeed, he protested in one article, he was an "unabashed Americanophile".

Either way, American classics such as John Steinbeck's *Of Mice And Men* and Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird* were thrust into a limelight they had not occupied for many years. Happily for The Marlowe Theatre in

Canterbury, then, a stage adaption of *To Kill A Mockingbird* arrives next month.

For those who don't know (perhaps you bunked school all those years ago), Lee's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel is set in the Deep South in the 1930s, the time of the Great Depression, and concerns the seemingly ever-present issue of racial injustice in small-town America... look at this week's clashes in Ferguson, Missouri, if you need any convincing about how sensitive this subject still is.

In Lee's book, lawyer Atticus Finch defends Tom Robinson, a black man accused of raping young white woman Mayella Ewell. Finch suffers horrible abuse for defending a black man, while his children Jem and Scout are also subject to vilification from many in the town.

It is Jem and Scout's bravery in facing up to their tormentors that is one of the strongest elements of Lee's story that in 2006 was rated by British librarians as the one book that "every adult should read before they die".

This stage production, adapted by Christopher Sergel, comes from Regent's Park Open Air

Continued on page **41** »

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« Continued from page 39

Theatre and has proved astonishingly popular with audiences and reviewers alike.

It is directed by Timothy Shearer, who chose not to stick the boot into the beleaguered Gove when asked about the work's relevance to the GCSE syllabus debate.

"I don't think he [Gove] literally meant the American books had got to come off the syllabus. I think he was using them to say that we need more British stuff, which I agree with," he said.

"It's not a case of either/or. If something has brilliant dialogue, then there's a place for it and it's been good to see people putting up their hand in this discussion.

"[Arthur] Miller, Steinbeck and Lee are all important, but I also love Charles Dickens characters, which of course aren't American.

"The thing with the American writers being talked about is that they're from the 20th century and are completely relevant to us.

Dickens books set in Victorian London are beautiful stories, but they're not relevant to children now.

"Some stories, though, are at the core of humanity and that's why there's another tour of *Mockingbird*.

"When all is said and done, though, I appreciate Gove's candour and his stirring up of the debate."

The production coming to Canterbury is not a simple retelling of Lee's work, so what lies in store for the Marlowe audience?

"It's quite stylised and different," said Shearer. "People in modern dress read from the book and then move into those characters and



ACT OF THE MATTER: The more things change, the more they stay the same

become that person. The prose is so beautiful – you have the whole court scene in Alabama but with it set by someone with a Welsh accent.

"It was entirely my choice to work with *Mockingbird*. It had such a profound effect on me as a kid – the first time I read it, it was through the eyes of a Scout, but I've been re-reading it as an adult.

"This is like a flash-mob reading of the book to keep it timeless and relevant. I think race is completely relevant to us today, as are issues around parenting, class, child abuse, exclusion within your own community and being detached from core communal values.

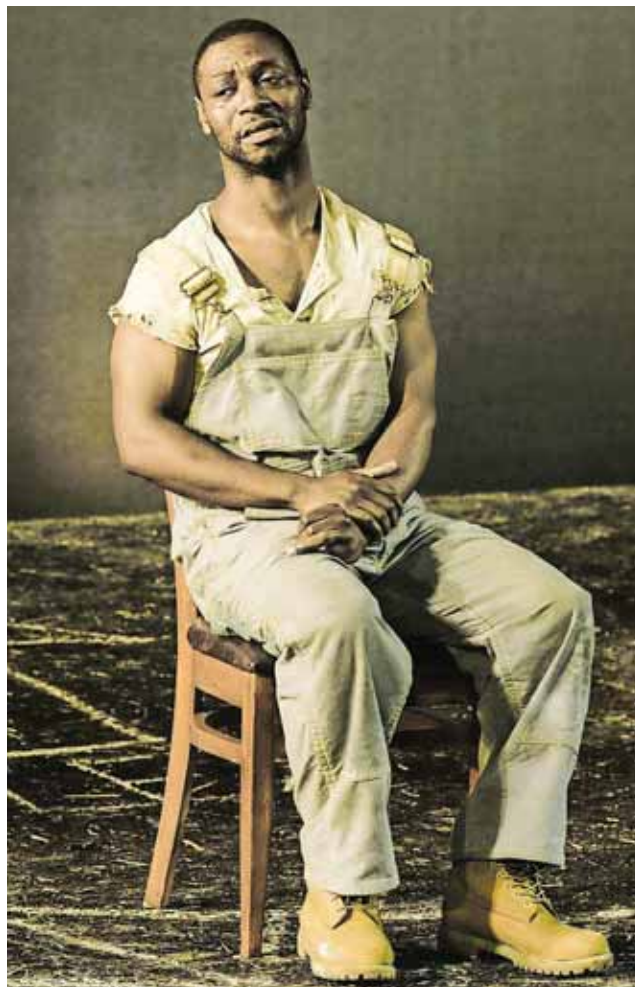
"It's the whole thing of a child in fear and prejudice towards someone shunned as a monster but who is

eventually seen for the socially-excluded man he is.

"It's not a thriller, though, and we acknowledge that the audience knows what happens."

And that fact alone shows quite what a wonderful work Lee Harper all those years ago created. Timeless... and brilliant, whether Michael Gove likes it or not.

■ **To Kill A Mockingbird** runs at The Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury, from Tuesday to Saturday, September 16-20. Performances are at 7.30pm, with Wednesday and Thursday matinees at 1.30pm and a Saturday matinee at 2.30pm. Tickets are priced from £19-£34.50. Phone 01227 787787 or visit www.marlowetheatre.com.



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Birmingham Tattoo Friday 28th November 2014 - £175.00

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2 nights stay with dinner, bed and breakfast includes with a choice of menu available, Birmingham Tattoo tickets in the mid-section arena. On our way home we will be stopping at the Bicester Shopping Village for some free time where you can discover a relaxed shopping haven in the beautiful Oxfordshire countryside, where boutiques showcase the world's leading fashion and lifestyle brands with fabulous savings all year round. Shopping is pure pleasure at Bicester Village.

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AROTHSCHILD'S giraffe named Valentino has joined two females at Port Lymyne Wild Animal Park to hopefully start a breeding programme.

Adrian Harland, the park's animal director, said: "We are delighted to welcome this lovely male giraffe to the reserve and to be accepted as part of this breeding programme."

"There are so few Rothschild's giraffes in the wild that programmes like this are essential."

Port Lymyne has now joined an exclusive group of 14 institutions in the UK to have Rothschild's giraffes and become part of a worldwide breeding programme.

The programme is designed to save the endangered subspecies, of which fewer than 700 individuals are thought to remain in the wild.

Paul Beer, head of rhino and giraffe section, said: "The arrival of Valentino is fantastic news."

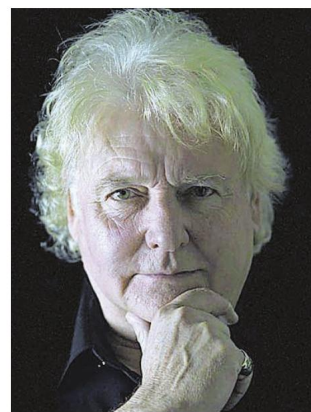
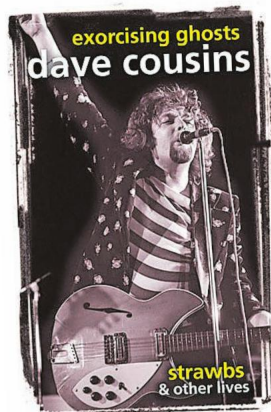
"He's a good-looking, healthy male and I'm hoping that the girls take a shine to him."

Visitors to Port Lymyne will be able to see the appropriately-named Valentino exploring his new surroundings on The African Experience – 100 acres alive with African animals such as black rhino, zebra, wildebeest and ostrich.

To celebrate Valentino's arrival, Port Lymyne is offering 20 per cent discount on standard day-entry tickets when visitors book online prior to visiting.

For further information, including opening times, entry prices and special events, you can visit www.aspinallfoundation.org/portlympne.

Strawbs' Dave Cousins 'lifts lid' on his 50 years in music and on the radio



DEAL musician Dave Cousins, frontman of Strawbs, is releasing his autobiography next month and we are all promised an "explosive" read.

It is entitled *Exorcising Ghosts* and a spokesman for the publisher said: "This explosive book promises to lift the lid on the highs and lows of Cousins's celebrated 50-year music career."

"It charts how a working-class boy from west London came to sell out stadiums, discover Sandy Denny and Rick Wakeman, mix with iconic figures such as David Bowie, Richard Attenborough and Dame Vera Lynn, meet royalty and gain the Pope's blessings and change the face of

commercial radio in the UK. "Cousins details Strawbs' extraordinary rise from their beginnings in the revivalist folk scene of the 1960s to chart-topping success in the '70s after they became the first British band signed to A&M Records in Hollywood."

"And it reveals his struggles with music management and the impact of commercialism on his music."

"For the first time, it also documents Cousins's remarkable and little-known 'parallel' career in radio and provides an insight into 'machinations' that he believes destroyed community-based UK stations."

Readers of *Exorcising Ghosts* can enjoy 'warts and all' stories about

such iconic friends and collaborators as Rick Wakeman (of Strawbs and Yes), Led Zeppelin, David Bowie, Sandy Denny (of Fairport Convention), Blue Weaver (of Bee Gees) and Andy Richards (Frankie Goes To Hollywood).

Cousins himself said of writing the book: "I have found the experience unsettling and emotional but cathartic at the same time. It has saved me a fortune in psychiatrists' fees."

"I have discovered that there have been an equal number of peaks and troughs in my career. It's been a roller-coaster ride!"

Exorcising Ghosts is due for general release on Monday, September 1, and is published by Music Sales.

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Marcus defies the music snobs on his rise and rise

From the moment Marcus Collins auditioned for the eighth series of The X Factor and finished second only to girlband Little Mix, the only way has been up. Ironically, though, the show that propelled this richly talented singer to the nation's consciousness has also proved his greatest hurdle.

Collins has had to overcome no small amount of snobbery from those who scoff at TV talent shows such as The X Factor.

"I'm very proud I've come from a show like that," he said. "There is a stigma attached to it that means you have to work that little bit harder to get to the same level as other artists."

"Some people look down their noses at you, but it's really hard work to produce your own album. There are negative ideas about where you've come from, but there's so much that goes on behind the scenes that people don't know about."

"If they're not from a privileged background, some artists who come through these shows are regarded as a flash in the pan, even though they might be hard workers and willing to try their hand at anything."

"During the show I'd be up at 5am and work till nine or 10 at night, but

people don't think about that."

"Also, you look at other artists and you don't know their backgrounds or their stories, but everyone on X Factor has their story in the public eye from the start."

Happily, such attitudes have been brushed aside by Collins during his soaring career, which has seen him make the Top 10 in the album and single charts with Marcus Collins and Seven Nation Army respectively.

He has, of course, been blessed by his collaboration with Take That idol Gary Barlow, who was his mentor and a judge on The X Factor.

And this bundle of musical excellence comes to Tunbridge Wells next month, when Collins brings his band to the Assembly Hall Theatre. What can the audience expect?

"There's going to be something for everyone, but the show is particularly inspired by Motown, which is my favourite music and as relevant today as it ever was."

■ **Marcus Collins is at the Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells, on Friday, September 12, at 7.30pm. Tickets are priced at £20 (concessions £18). Phone 01892 530613 or alternatively visit www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk.**

Models take to the skies

ORGANISERS of the Southern Model Show have promised that the best of the remote-control modelling world will be descending on Headcorn Aerodrome over the Battle of Britain weekend.

The show will feature a huge array of models, with those new to modelling able to try their hand at flying a model plane for the first time.

The flying programme offers tremendous variety, with scenes from history played out by model pilots.

The Battle of Britain will be replicated as the final flying finale, while D-Day will also make up a display.

It isn't just flying that will be on the agenda – model buggies, cars, tanks, motorbikes and trucks will also feature as well as a range of model boats.

The show, on September 13-14, has something for all and will include children's amusements, crafts and a showground packed with traders offering everything you need for models.

Gates open at 10am on both days and tickets are priced at £12 per adult, £10 per child or £35 for a family ticket (two adults and two children).

Weekend camping tickets cost £60 for any motorhome, caravan or tent and include entry on both days for two adults and two children.

Tickets can be bought in advance at a discounted rate. Visit www.headcornevents.co.uk or alternatively phone 0845 652 62 63.



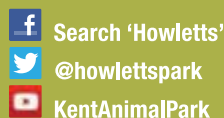
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KENT LIFE



FLAVOURS: Julia Ponsonby's new recipe book *Gaia's Feasts* includes stunning recipes, beautiful pictures and a genuine alternative to meat dishes

Recipes so good you will forget they're vegetarian

Julia Ponsonby's recipe book will appeal to everyone keen on nourishing body and soul, writes **Maria Chiorando**

WHETHER it's for health, ethical or a raft of other reasons, many people are starting to reduce their meat intake.

It makes sense: statistics show that vegetarians live longer, and a well-conceived diet without meat can also be a bit easier on the purse.

Some may choose to eat meat but not all the time, buying into the 'meat-free Monday' concept, or simply wanting a lighter meal.

The only problem is that as a nation known for our love of meat and two veg, it can be difficult to construct a meal that does not centre on meat, and many people do not know where to start without it as the star of their plate.

A new book – *Gaia's Feasts* by writer Julia Ponsonby – seeks to address that, providing an array of recipes that manage to be hearty and tasty without the addition of any flesh.

Ponsonby has been the chef at Schumacher College for 15 years. The college focuses on learning to live sustainably, offering short

courses and post-graduate qualifications in topics such as ecological design.

The introduction to the book is written by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, a celebrity who has done much in recent years to alert the wider public to food-production issues.

He says the book is "beautifully simple and honest" inspiring food that has been "produced in a sustainable way, harvested in season, and that has travelled as little as possible – food that has been cooked with care and enthusiasm and served with an understanding of its importance, not as mere sustenance, but as nourishment for body and soul".

The idea of local food is an on-trend one and also highly apt for a county with such a wide range of indigenous produce.

This is an important part of the book: it is not just about recipes but also about focusing on a holistic way of using food and eating. While this may sound like hippy-talk, the recipes offer a sophistication of flavours that belie

any pre-conceived notions people may have about meat-free meals being tasteless.

The book is divided into sections: soups, mains, desserts, cakes, cookies and bread.

Classics like English onion soup with cider and croutons battle it out with more exotic offerings such as lime, lentil and coconut whizz.

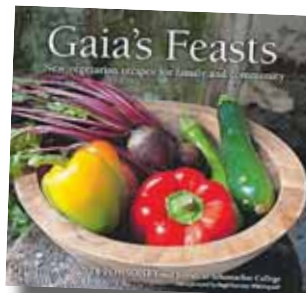
The soups look largely hearty and could provide the cornerstone to a meal, along with the bread recipes offered.

There are favourites like soda bread and spelt loaf but also more adventurous varieties such as apple-and-oat bread and squash-and-tomato baguette.

The author has been very mindful of dietary requirements; many of the recipes are gluten-free... even some of the bread and cake ones.

There are also lots of vegan options, useful for both vegans and the lactose-intolerant alike.

Hearty stews, pies and pasta feature heavily among the mains, with imaginative plates like sweetcorn fritters, savoury stuffed pancakes and quinoa goulash



included alongside basics like double-baked potatoes and tomato tarte-tatin.

While the book does include lots of healthy foods, there is certainly room for indulgence, with desserts like chocolate-and-hazelnut gateau, coconut cake and ginger cake among the offerings.

The cookie section also holds delights, a striking example being squidgy choc-chip cookies and wild golden oaties.

This book is vegetarian cooking at its most imaginative and accessible best, with beautiful pictures, easily-assembled and delicious recipes and information about sustainability and food production. It makes a useful purchase for vegetarians and meat-eaters alike.

A spectacular production in the shadow of the cathedral

The Green Room, The Marlowe

Location: Canterbury

By David Mairs

If something's worth doing, it's worth doing well, they say.

It's an important concept to consider when an organisation opts to offer a product outside its standard realm.

Take The Marlowe Theatre in Canterbury, the arts venue that reopened almost three years ago after a refurbishment costing more than £25 million.

The main feature, of course, was the increased capacity of 1,200, larger orchestra pit and extended fly tower allowing the hosting of larger productions in the main theatre.

Together with a 150-seat studio space, The Marlowe was clearly upping its game. It was, however, no more than you might expect from a venue seeking to develop its status.

A more ambitious venture, in its way, was the development of The Green Room, "our relaxed café, bar and restaurant", to coin The Marlowe's own description.

Happily, it opted for the maxim with which we started this tale and sought a top-class kitchen team to provide diners with the opportunity to eat well before, as they say in these circles, catching a show.

Not that you have to watch a Marlowe production to eat here, of course, and that in itself tells its own story. Because The Green Room is worth visiting solely and purely for the quality of its food.

Bright, breezy and contemporary, with its glass frontage allowing the wonderful backdrop of Canterbury Cathedral, you feel in a good place from the moment you walk in.

The menu is tight, without the need to wade through an exhaustive array of choices, perhaps a nod to the fact that show-goers might sometimes be squeezed for time.

Either way, I chose hot smoked salmon on a Caesar salad with bacon

and anchovies to start. It was, if I say it myself, an inspired selection, the salad being crisp and flavoursome and the mix of salmon, bacon and anchovies a riotous explosion of taste.

My guest selected the vegetarian option of tart of plum tomatoes, Mozzarella, red onions, pesto, balsamic vinegar and rocket leaves and was as thrilled with her choice as I had been.

There was only ever one choice of main for me: slow-cooked breast of lamb, dauphinoise potatoes, tapenade, fine beans and roast peppers. As a connoisseur of such dishes, I can joyfully report that here

was a classic of its kind. Flawless.

There was similar sentiment over the other side of the table, where stuffed lemon and sage chicken, fondant potato, creamed leeks and crisp bacon was consumed with obvious glee.

We both went for red-berry Eton mess as dessert and shared a bottle of Chapel Down Flint Dry.

I can offer no negative word about our experience... it had been sublime.

■ **The Green Room**
The Marlowe Theatre
The Friars
Canterbury CT1 2AS
(web www.marlowetheatre.com
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Airfix D-Day exhibition still on show at the Hornby Visitor Centre. This exhibition helps celebrate one of the most important days of the 20th Century. The D-day exhibition features a huge interactive diorama and displays setting out some of the key stories from the 'Day of Days'. The exhibition will be included in the admission cost to the Hornby Visitor Centre.

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Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances, and a daytime phone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit all letters.

Let's sort out the other things first!

I READ with interest your article on the housing increase in the county.

As a resident in Kent for the last 50 years I have observed how our green county has been in filled with housing, which has been a creeping phenomenon.

Travelling down to the Thanet coast, where once there were green fields, now there are the backs of housing estates right up to the main roads, especially near Canterbury.

Once the breathing space of Kent, the Thanet area around Westwood Cross has been given over to commercial premises and the fields, which were the lifeblood of the nation, given over to new roads and even more development.

While I have no problem with brownfield sites being made available for housing development, to allow good agricultural land to be used for this purpose is throwing away our country's assets.

We have an existing problem in the South East with the lack of infrastructure to support more housing.

Thanet beaches are regularly being soiled with sewage because the system cannot cope with extra high rainfall, and the roads are always needing repair.

Add to this the problems with hospitals under special measures in Kent and the social deprivations in certain areas...

Why not get these sorted first before embarking of projects that are designed only to put the government and councils in a good light?

Celia Bibby, by email

Single people like me need a flat

GARDEN cities are a very good idea and not only for houses but for flats too for single people like myself, who have lived in a village for most of their lives.

Yes, and these homes should also be made affordable too for low-wage-earners such as myself.

I am sorry too say that people campaign against new homes being built.

They should not be so selfish because everyone needs a good roof over their head and somewhere to live.

There is a very great shortage of housing stock all over this country and local councils and housing associations should be able to build

LETTER OF THE WEEK



Countryside is under threat from Tories

THE chairman of the National Trust has said there are 150,000 planning applications for Green Belt land under the government's new planning laws.

This figure is disputed but, whatever the number, the government's policy is threatening the countryside.

Love of the countryside is a core value for Conservative voters. Indeed, one of the reasons to support the Conservative Party is it is the party that protects the countryside.

But the Government's removal of the brownfield target for new houses encourages developers to ignore brownfield, an approach the housebuilders favour due to the remedial costs, the constraints of pre-defined sites and the 20 per cent VAT on re-development.

While the Conservative Party has not promoted building on the countryside, if brownfield is downgraded, the only place left to build is the countryside.

The free-market principles of Conservatism prevent any direction of housing to areas of low density, leaving the market to decide the location of housing and the market will not take long in deciding between building in Northumbria and in Kent.

For Kent voters, Ken Livingstone's vertical city – where London is built upwards and not outwards – is attractive. How has the Conservative Party reached the point where its policies are less attractive than Ken Livingstone's?

The previous generation of Conservatives emerged from decades of socialism and declared Britain 'open for business'. This generation has decreed the British countryside is open for business.

For those Conservative voters for who the countryside is not a secondary value, the policies of the Conservative Party are not something to vote for but a threat.

J Redbridge, by email

more and the planning laws relaxed.
Robert Standing, Strood

EU-US health deal poses NHS danger

PEOPLE in this country are rightly proud of the NHS, and many are angry at the creeping privatisation now being introduced.

The service will be further threatened if a trade deal currently being negotiated with the US goes ahead.

The EU-US trade deal aims to open both health care and education up to competition by American companies.

Under the deal, any future UK government could also find itself being sued for billions of pounds if it attempts to reverse NHS

privatisation measures. The government of Slovakia has already been sued for reversing the privatisation of its health system.

Public health and education are essential for a fair society and we must not let the government sign away our rights to these services.

There is a growing campaign against the deal, organised by a variety of groups including the World Development Movement, and I hope readers will join me in supporting it.

Daniel Freear, Folkestone

All animals need better treatment

KIM Vincent's article on live exports (KoS, letters, last week) is strongly supported by me and countless others.

Why are we so hypocritical in this so-called animal-loving nation?

We allow puppies in from dubious backgrounds abroad and the import of exotic creatures quite unsuitable in our homes and permit the plight of abandoned animals and terrible neglect in so many areas.

Is there not enough misery and cruelty in the human race without inflicting suffering on innocent creatures?

The RSPCA and other relevant charities have reported large increases in serious cases of inhumane behaviour.

The government should introduce more legislation and make people aware of the suffering they are causing.

More education is needed.

We do depend on animals in so many ways and yet consider ourselves more intelligent. Profit is not everything.

C Whitehead, Tenterden

Ukip: a credible force in politics?

DOES anyone really believe Ukip is a credible, respectable force in British politics?

Given the latest remarks made by MEP Janice Atkinson – just her latest in a series of gaffes – I struggle to understand why anyone would genuinely support a party where such views so clearly bubble close to the surface.

Nigel Farage may be able to conduct himself in public well, but I've little proof any others within his party can.

They are, quite simply, a joke.

H Smith, Tonbridge

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles which tie in with our parent company Archant's overall mission statement.

Archant's mission statement is: "We bring together motivated buyers and sellers through the creation of unique and compelling content and community expertise." This is summed up in the strapline 'Inspiring Communities'.

The way KoS will create our unique and compelling content is to follow these 10 principles:
Kent on Sunday will:

- 1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
- 2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
- 3) Be written in clear, concise English.
- 4) Not be overly sensational.
- 5) Have a sense of humour.
- 6) Have an easily understood division between

news, comment and advertising.

- 7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
- 8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
- 9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
- 10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.



Elham countryside by **Kerry King** from Canterbury

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GCSE RESULTS...



KENT College is celebrating another year of excellent GCSE results following this summer's examinations. The overall pass rate was 100 per cent and almost all students achieved five grades at A* to C, with 71 per cent of all grades achieved being A* to B grades. This statistic mirrors the success of A-level (77 per cent A* to B) results last week.

Students who did particularly well include the following top performers: Lottie Astbury, Alla Ayupova, Marina Barwick, Isabella Brant, Georgina Crowther, Jules Frank, Eloise Gazan, Rahul Gupte, Rachel Harrison, Sam Hines, William Irvin, Elizabeth Letley, Jonathan Nevett, Oliver Norman, Victoria Nozdracheva, Hannah Parry, Frank Radcliffe-Adams, Hunter Stuart, Georgina Townsend, Rosie White and Imogen Wright.

The happy students are pictured in front of a major extension that was being craned into position. This will accommodate an increase in student numbers that reflects the growing interest in the success of Kent College.

Headmaster Dr David Lamper said: "The pupils achieved excellent results and have secured sound foundations for the next stage in their educational career. On top of wonderful A-level results last week our students can be proud of their achievements.

"Congratulations to them and to my colleagues for the hard work that makes results like these possible."

Celebrating a 100 per cent pass rate



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GCSE RESULTS...



Technology careers beckon for students

THE Leigh UTC specialises in engineering and computer sciences, offering students a superb education in a state-of-the-art building that will give them the specialist skills, knowledge and experience to have a successful career in the technology sector.

Steve Leahey, principal of the new Leigh UTC, which opens to students on Monday, September 8, said: "At the moment, you're probably facing some very important choices about your education.

"You'll know that getting these decisions right is highly likely to influence your future career and whether you reach the heights you want to reach.

"At the ground-breaking Leigh UTC we know we are at the very forefront of education for post-16 students.

"Our approach to learning, which involves lots of specialised input from industry and aca-

ademic partners, will provide you with a great foundation for the future.

"We offer sixth-form students the chance to tailor their studies to fit their individual interests, abilities and ambitions."

Alongside their academic studies, students will spend one day a week in a work-experience programme.

The Leigh UTC offers different progression routes, which include A-levels, Level 3 vocational qualifications and advanced apprenticeships in engineering and IT.

All our students will have the opportunity to follow professional qualifications, which include Cisco Academy, Microsoft Academy and AutoDesk CAD.

The Leigh UTC will be holding an open day on Saturday, October 4, and an open evening on Wednesday, October 15, for parents and students.

Further details can be obtained from our website, www.theleighutc.org.uk.



Engineer your future

THE engineering industry is an exciting one to join, with above-average pay and excellent career-development opportunities.

Did you realise that engineering covers electronics (instrumentation, IT controls systems, CAD/CAM), mechanical (machining, CNC, transmissions, pneumatics, hydraulics, maintenance) electrical (installation, generation and transmission, circuits, CAD) renewables (solar, photo voltaic, wind turbine) and construction (control systems, steelwork, fabrications)?

Entry into engineering is now via apprenticeships at Level 2, GCSEs below

grade C or at Level 3 five-plus GCSEs at C+ including English and maths.

Once trained and qualified, salaries are in excess of £20,000. Many companies in Kent are looking for young people, women and men, to join the industry. Two of our recent students are already earning £25,000+ at the age of 21.

The Skills Centre offers people aged 16 to 18 full-time courses in engineering. The centre also has apprenticeship opportunities on offer for six- to 24-year-olds.

Visit www.swaleskillscentre.co.uk, phone Alan Barham on 07833 051 622 or email alan.barham@sittingbourne.kent.sch.uk.

"Engineering is the growth industry in Kent!"

Are you an ex-Year 11, 12 or 13 student?

Are you interested in studying Engineering?

Or in gaining an Engineering Apprenticeship?

It is not too late to apply to the Swale Skills Centre!

Contact Alan Barham on 07833051622

or e-mail alan.barham@sittingbourne.kent.sch.uk

Alternatively, come and talk to us at the Careers, Training and Jobs Fayre in the Forum Shopping Centre, Sittingbourne from the 1st to the 4th September, 2014.



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IMAGINE THE FUTURE, CREATE THE FUTURE, INSPIRE THE FUTURE



YOUR NEXT MOVE...



NO matter what life throws at you or however old you may be, there are still plenty of options available at MidKent College.

Whether you're looking to learn new skills, switch careers or simply enjoy a new hobby, the college – one of the biggest and best in the South East – is sure to have a course to suit your every need.

Many people have no idea what they want to do with their lives for many years after leaving school, so if you're thinking about signing up but are worried about being the only adult learner in the college, there's no need – you won't be.

From those traditional courses like plumbing and hairdressing to more modern options such as creative media and IT, there are endless possibilities for those planning a career change or eyeing that lucrative promotion.

One of the college's ongoing success stories is the growth of its higher-education provision, providing adult learners with a great alternative to university through its range of qualifications, including Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) and foundation degrees.

Tuition fees for full-time HE courses for the 2014-15 academic year – all of which are validated by either the University of Kent or Canterbury Christ Church University – are £5,950.

"HNDs in particular are often discredited as not having the same value as a degree, but they can in fact be a better choice for many people," said Stephen Batchelor, MidKent College's director of higher education.

"They have a stronger element of vocational

learning, imparting real-world skills in addition to the academic side of things."

Meanwhile, the college also offers a number of Access to Higher Education courses – perfect for adult learners who want to develop their careers by gaining a degree but lack the formal qualifications wanted by most higher-education institutions.

Its tutors help students learn and develop the skills needed to study at university, while time will also be allocated to the UCAS application process.

Most Access courses – which include Access to Healthcare, Access to Social Sciences and Access to Teaching and Humanities – run over three or four days and last for a year, with classes designed to be flexible and fit in with school hours.

"I would do it all over again if I could," said 36-year-old Fransine Okotie, who progressed to study for a degree in midwifery at Canterbury Christ Church University after completing an Access course at the college.

"It was the best decision I've ever made and has really helped me set a direction for my life.

"I was a bit nervous about returning to education in my 30s, but everybody else was in the same position, so I was able to settle in really quickly.

"I can't praise the course enough. It was a great experience and really prepared me for the type of things I've had to do at university."

Visit www.midkent.ac.uk for more information or phone the course information line on 01634 402020.

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YOUR NEXT MOVE...



The University of Greenwich has three campuses. The main one is on the banks of the River Thames in Greenwich, south-east London.

The other two sites are in Avery Hill, Eltham, south-east London, and Medway, north Kent. All campuses are within easy reach of the centre of London.

The university offers more than 1,200 postgraduate and degree programmes, including accounting and finance, chemistry, agriculture, computing, engineering, pharmacy, sociology and more.

Greenwich was ranked top for adult nursing in the latest NHS London performance ratings for universities and colleges.

Its law courses came top in the UK for overall student satisfaction in the latest national student survey.

With strong links to business, many of the university's programmes include a work-experience element.

Praised for its exceptional teaching and high-quality lectures, Greenwich is currently ranked joint third in London for student satisfaction by the Sunday Times University Guide.

The University of Greenwich has a thriving international community, with students from 140 countries.

English-language tuition and academic support is provided to all international students whose first language is not English.



Why University of Greenwich?

Greenwich's team of international advisers will give you all the help you need to adapt to life in England.

They will be able to advise you on everything from personal and welfare matters to immigration issues.

The staff in the university's student centres will be able to help you with a wide range of issues, from opening a bank account to registering with a doctor.

The Students' Union runs a huge

range of sporting clubs and societies. Sporting clubs include American football, cricket, basketball, hockey, rowing, badminton and more.

There are more than 20 societies at Greenwich that represent a broad

range of interests, faiths and nationalities.

These include law and Muslim, Nigerian and Chinese associations.

Scholarships are available to international students.

Study while you work



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Recruitment packs are available from Westlands School or online (www.swaleacademiestrust.org.uk).

Please note, we cannot accept CVs without an application form. Closing date: 4 September 2014 (noon)

Swale Academies Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check.

Contact DetailsTel: 01795 477475 Fax: 01795 479461
Email swa@westlands.kent.sch.uk

Trust Principal: Mr J Whitcombe MA - Headteacher: Mr S Cox MA
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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF INTENDED LAND DISPOSAL

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

SECTION 123 (2A)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Tunbridge Wells Borough Council intends to dispose of the freehold interest in four areas of land, which are for identification purposes are described in the schedule to this notice.

This notice is given in so far as the areas of land consist of or form part of an open space within the meaning of the above Section.

Plans of the land are available to view at the Gateway, 8 Grosvenor Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 2AB or at the Weald Information Centre, The Old Fire Station, Stone Street, Cranbrook TN17 3HF.

Objections to the proposed disposals must be made in writing to the Legal Services Manager, Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 1RS by no later than 5th September 2014.

SCHEDULE

Land adjacent to 21 Dale Street, Tunbridge Wells, Kent (approximately 0.012 hectares)

Land adjacent to 1 Harries Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent (approximately 0.019 hectares)

Land on the west side of Quarry Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent (approximately 0.009 hectares)

Land at Aspen Way, Tunbridge Wells, Kent (approximately 0.002 hectares)

John Scarborough,
Head of Legal Services

Dated 18 August 2014



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PLANNING



Notice of Publication of the Shepway District Council Community Infrastructure Levy Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule

Planning Act 2008 (Part 11) / Localism Act 2011
(Part 6)
Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010
(as amended) Regulation 15

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge that partly replaces section 106 planning obligations. CIL will apply to certain new developments in an area, with income used to part fund infrastructure. CIL Regulations and guidance require CIL rates to be set at a level that maintains development viability.

As part of the formal process, Shepway District Council has produced a CIL Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule (PDCCS), which is issued for consultation. The CIL PDCCS sets out proposed CIL rates, which are considered to be set at an appropriate level to secure both infrastructure funding contributions and development viability in the District.

In accordance with Regulation 15 of the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended), comments and representations are invited on the CIL PDCCS, and its associated evidence base documents, during the consultation period from 18th August 2014 to 13th October 2014 at 5pm.

The CIL PDCCS, a consultation comments response form, and supporting documents on viability and infrastructure, are available for inspection online or at the Civic Centre, as follows:

- Online via the District Council's website:
<http://www.shepway.gov.uk/content/view/201786/206/>
- At Shepway District Council's Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, Kent CT20 2QY (from 8.30am to 5pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays; and from 9.30am to 5pm on Wednesdays).

Comments and representations can be made and submitted as follows:

- By email, by downloading and completing the consultation comments response form, with this to be sent to – planning.policy@shepway.gov.uk
- By post, by downloading and completing a hard copy of the consultation comments response form; or by obtaining a hard copy of the form from the Civic Centre – with this to be sent to the above address.

In accordance with the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended), comments and representations received on the CIL PDCCS will be taken into consideration in preparing a subsequent Draft CIL Charging Schedule. Following an additional period of consultation on the second draft, the charging schedule will be subject to an examination in public.

For further information, please contact the Council's Planning Policy team at
tel. 01303 853364 /
or by email: planning.policy@shepway.gov.uk



THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (THE DISTRICT OF SHEPWAY) (FOLKESTONE TOWN CENTRE AND THE BAYLE PARKING ZONE) ORDER 2012

(AMENDMENT NO 3)
(ZONE A1 TIMES OF OPERATION) ORDER 2014

Notice is hereby given that KENT COUNTY COUNCIL proposes the above Order under Sections 1, 2, 32, 44, 45 and 124 of and Part IV of Schedule 9 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and of all other enabling powers, and after consultation with the chief officer of police in accordance with Part III of Schedule 9 to the Act:

The Order shall come into effect on the 1st September 2014 and will implement new parking restrictions in the following streets:

ROADS IN FOLKESTONE

Limited waiting 2 hour no return within 2 hours (8am – 6pm Mondays to Saturdays (both days inclusive)) – Bouverie Road West – All time limited waiting parking places between Castle Hill Avenue and Christ Church Road; Cheriton Place – East side, from a point 24.5 metres north of its junction with Sandgate Road, north for a distance of 94.1 metres; Christ Church Road – All time limited parking places between Bouverie Road West and Sandgate Road; Grace Hill – South west side, from a point 28.4 metres north west of its junction with Rendezvous Street, north west to a point 22.9 metres south east of its junction with Shellons Street; Sandgate Road – All time limited parking places between Castle Hill Avenue and a point 67.6 metres south west of its junction with Bouverie Place; Shellons Street – South east side, from a point 25 metres south west of its junction with Grace Hill, south west for a distance of 35 metres; The Leas – South east side, from a point 11.2 metres west of its junction with Road of Remembrance, south west for a distance of 15.7 metres; West Terrace – south west, from a point 46.6 metres south east of its junctions with Bouverie Place, south east for a distance of 12.5 metres.

A copy of the Order, a copy of any Orders which may be affected by it, and a statement of the council's reasons for proposing the Order can be inspected at the Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, CT20 2QY, during normal office hours.

If you have any questions concerning the Order or require further information please contact Shepway District Council (Parking Services), Council Offices, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, CT20 2QY (01303 853240 during normal office hours).

This notice is published by Shepway District Council on behalf of Kent Highway Services, County Hall, Maidstone, ME14 1XX. Kent Highway Services is part of Kent County Council.



THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2010

The following applications have been submitted for consideration by the Council:

Y14/0782/SH# - Orchard Caravan Park Burmarsh Road Burmarsh Romney Marsh Kent - Change of use to allow operation of caravan park for year round holiday use

Y14/0907/SH# - Tynwald Hillside Street Hythe Kent CT21 5DJ - Felling of a tree subject of Tree Preservation Order No. 1 of 1971

Any representations should be made in writing to the Head of Planning, Shepway District Council, Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 2QY or emailed to planning@shepway.gov.uk. Comments should be made in writing within 21 days from the date of publication. It should be noted that any representations received will be made available for public inspection.

Some applications can be viewed at other locations in addition to the Civic Centre, Folkestone. The applications are marked as follows:

- # - The One Stop Shop, Magpies, Church Approach, New Romney
- + - Hythe Town Council Offices, Stade Street, Hythe

Applications can be viewed and comments made online at <http://searchplanapps.shepway.gov.uk/online-applications/>.

The applications marked (*) do not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area in which the land to which the application relates is situated.

C Lewis, Head of Planning
Shepway District Council

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Europe's best beach volleyballers

Isle's golden sands again play host to some of the sport's best male and female players, who were taking part in the final stage of the tightly-contested Volleyball England beach tour

FOR the second year running, the golden sands of Margate beach hosted the final event on the Volleyball England Beach tour calendar... and it didn't disappoint.

With sunny spells and blustery conditions, last weekend's Margate Masters proved another successful weekend of beach volleyball action as some of the best players from across Europe competed to be crowned British champions.

The event is organised and hosted by Thanet District Council's Sport Matters team in partnership with Volleyball England. This aims to bring the top players on the British and international beach circuit for a weekend of national-level competitive sport while promoting beach volleyball to local residents.

The Margate Masters was the last stop on the Volleyball England Beach Tour, following a number of tour events that took place at Skegness, Great Yarmouth, Weston-Super-Mare and Weymouth before finally stopping off in Margate to host this year's final event.

The players compete to accumulate ranking points to qualify for the national tour finals, which eight teams compete in both the men's and women's field.

This year's event saw packed grandstands, proof of the appeal of this growing sport.

The junior matches took place on the outside courts, with the finals being contested on centre court.

The junior boys' finals showcased

some top-class entertainment, with Sam Allen and Isaa Batrane taking on Ryan Poole and Harry Jones.

The match was level at one set apiece before Allen and Batrane took the deciding set to be crowned junior boys champions.

Next up was the junior girls, who showed great determination in the face of some difficult weather as Ellie Austin and Yasmin Kaashoek took on Sophie Szysko and Emma Hebbes.

Despite the brief torrential conditions, the players continued to play out their match, with Austin and Kaashoek edging out their opponents to be crowned junior girls champions.

Lastly, it was the battle of the titans, with the women's and men's finals taking place in fairer weather conditions.

First up were English internationals Vicky Palmer and Jessica Grimson taking on reigning British champions Eva Holt and Katja Gless.

The women's final proved to be one of the best to date, with absolutely top-class beach volleyball being played on centre court.

After a closely-fought first set, Holt and Gless took the lead before Palmer and Grimson fought back in a close second to take the final into a deciding set.

Palmer and Grimson then showed great character to win the third set to be crowned British champions for the first time.

Next up was the battle for kings of the beach, with 6ft 10in Chris Gregory and Australian London



2012 Olympian Aden Tutton competing against English international team Phil Smith and Oliver Kimber.

Both teams provided an epic final match to this year's finals and after a heated first set Gregory and Tutton held the advantage.

It was down to Smith and Kimber to fight their way back into the match and take it to a final set.

Gregory and Tutton, however, showed their class to take the second set and be crowned British champions, rounding off another classic Margate event.

■ For more about the tournament, visit www.volleyballengland.org/beachtour.



Brands Hatch Sunday promises plenty of



MORE than 80 specialist rally cars are expected at Brands Hatch today (Sunday) as summer rallying returns to the circuit for the first time in two years.

The huge list of competitors will tackle eight stages, covering more than 60 miles on parts of the track never used before in competition.

The competitive stages will use the vehicle tunnel, circuit, paddock, pit lane and a purpose-built rally stage.

There will be strong local interest, with the Bexley Light Car Club represented by Jesse Crosse, Graham Sansom and Geoffrey Martin, all driving Ford Escorts, and Kevin Blackford in a 1275 Clubman Mini.

Two drivers from the Maidstone and Mid-Kent Motor Club, Christopher Newton and Vince Sillett, are also expected.



The Hutton Kitchens Brands Hatch Summer Stages will be only the second rally of the year at the circuit after January's MGJ Engineering Brands Hatch Winter Stages.

The victorious Darrian of Dean Thomas is among the challengers in the event.

It will have to contend with a host of Ford Escorts, including rally-bred Mexicos and other vintage

Mk1 and Mk2 variants. Many more iconic rallying machines, including an MG Metro 6R4, and later WRC-esque Subaru Imprezas and Mitsubishi, are among the burgeoning entry list.

Commentary for the day will be provided by Andrew Coley, who has commented on the International Rally Championship for Eurosport, the World Rally Championship on World Rally Radio and British Superbikes for the BBC.

The commentary will be broadcast on RallyFM and around the circuit. The first car is expected to get the rally under way at 9.50am, beginning a packed day of action.

Tickets for the Hutton Kitchens Brands Hatch Summer Stages cost £14 on the gate, with free admission for under-13s.

at Margate Masters



rallying thrills and spills



GOING FOR IT: More than 80 specialist rally cars will be at Brands Hatch on Sunday as summer rallying returns for the first time in two years

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NTW



INSPIRATION: Jonathan Palmer with Roger Pedrick at the Trinity Theatre

Former racer opens first art exhibition

QUADRIPLEGIC former racing-car-driver Roger Pedrick, who was injured in a Formula Ford testing accident at Brands Hatch almost four decades ago, has opened the first exhibition of his paintings.

Unity in Community was opened at the Trinity Theatre in Tunbridge Wells by Pedrick's long-time friend and ex-Formula 1 driver Jonathan Palmer, whose MotorSport Vision group operates the Kent circuit.

Pedrick's quadriplegia means he has very limited movement below the shoulders and as a result he paints with a brush between his teeth. He uses a special rotating easel to compensate for his lack of movement.

He is still a frequent visitor to Brands Hatch, where he has annually presented a trophy to the highest-placed English driver in the Formula Ford Festival since 1978, with notable recipients including Johnny Herbert and Jenson Button.

Despite the difficulties he has faced, Pedrick remains an upbeat character

who is proud of his achievements.

"I broke my back at Paddock Hill Bend 37 years ago," he said. "I always wanted to do motor-racing and I was bonkers about making it to the top and I had a go, but I ended up a quadriplegic, like Frank Williams."

"I spent seven years in hospital and then had to find somewhere to live and I found a place in Tunbridge Wells, where carers look after me."

"I had something to do to pass the time and I like creating and I like to make people smile, so that's how I got into painting."

"The paintings have been building up in my loft and I wanted somewhere to display them."

He now aims to take his work around the country, and abroad if possible, hoping to inspire others in a similar situation to him.

He said: "Other people are finding it stimulating, exciting and colourful, so what I'd really like to do is take it to other galleries."

Visit www.trinitytheatre.net.

Kent face Gloucestershire in One-Day Cup quarters

KENT Spitfires will take on Gloucestershire at Canterbury in the Royal London One-Day Cup quarter-final on Friday, August 29. Tickets for the match are already on sale.

Kent finished second in Group B, meaning they play Gloucestershire, who finished third in Group A.

Kent Cricket chief executive Jamie Clifford said: "This is a great achievement for our young and developing team to qualify to host one of the

quarter-final matches. This is the first time since 2009, when we played Durham in a T20 play-off match, that we have hosted a knock-out fixture and so I am sure all Kent supporters will be keen to get behind the team and ensure a bumper crowd."

Tickets are on sale through www.kentcricket.co.uk; through the shop at The Spitfire Ground, St Lawrence; and on the main phone line, 01227 456 886.

Gills' match at Coventry will be on TV

GILLINGHAM'S Sky Bet League One clash with Coventry City has been moved forward 24 hours for live television coverage on Sky Sports.

The match at the Ricoh Arena will now be played on Friday, September 5, with a scheduled kick-off time of 7.45pm.

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